

And Now, And Here

Volume 2

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh



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And Now, And Here

Volume 2

**by
Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh**

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INTRODUCTION

"You say, 'We don't want to jump in the ocean. We would like to enter the cool water; we know the sun is hot and we are sweating profusely, but we can't take a jump right now. We do want to jump, to leap forward, but please wait. How can we rush into it? We will do it tomorrow, or the day after.'"

And then you will be dead.
Who will do it then?

Now is the time! And you are the place!

In this book, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh gives us a taste of the cool breeze from the ocean of His enlightenment. If you have a little courage to risk meeting yourself, you will open your heart to the silence surrounding His words. There is life, there is love, there is laughter--and *you are there*.

Meditation is the key. Meditation is the jump into existence, into your own being. There is *all*. Only you can do it.

Now is the time! And you are the Here!
Do it!

Sambodhi Ma Yoga Rabiya
B.A.,M.A.,M.M.,D.Phil.M.(RIMU), Acharya

INTRODUCTION

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Do it!

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh
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Discourses given by
BHAGWAN SHREE RAJNEESH
in Bombay, India
November 4-5, 1969
and
August 1-6, 1970

And Now
And Here
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Discovers given by
BHAWAN SHREE RAJNESH
to Bombay, India
November 4-6, 1969
and
August 1-8, 1970

IGNORANCE OF LIFE IS DEATH

**Bhulabhai Auditorium, Bombay
Evening of November 4, 1969**

Man doesn't even know what life is. And if we can't know what life is, then there is no possibility of our knowing death either. As long as life itself remains unfamiliar, as long as it remains an enigma, there is no way one can be familiar with death, no way one can ever know what death is. The truth is, death seems to occur because we have no idea of what life is. For those who know life "death" is an impossible word. It is something which has never occurred, never occurs, can never occur.

There are certain words which are absolutely false; they contain not even an iota of truth. The word "death" is one of them. It is a totally false

word. No event like death occurs anywhere. But we see people dying every day. Every day, death seems to be happening all around us.

Every village has a cremation ground. And if we understand rightly, we will come to realize that wherever we may be standing on the earth, the dead bodies of countless people have been cremated on that very spot. The very piece of land on which we may have built our houses has been a cemetery at some time or other. Millions upon millions of people have died, and are dying every day. And yet, you will be surprised if I say there is no other word in the entire human language more false than "death".

There was a mystic in Tibet by the name of Marpa. Someone once came to him and said, "I have come to ask you about life and death." Marpa gave a big laugh and said, "If you want to know about life you are most welcome, because I know what life is. As far as death is concerned, I have not had any meeting with death, I am not acquainted with it. If you want to know death, go and ask those who are as good as dead, or those who are already dead. I am familiar with life. I can talk about life, I can show you what life is. I am not familiar with death."

This story is similar to the tale of darkness and light. Perhaps you may have heard it. Once darkness went to see God and implored, "Lord, this sun of yours is out to get me. I am exhausted. He starts chasing me at dawn and only after much trouble leaves me alone in the evening. What wrong have I done? What kind of enmity is this? Why is this sun following me and harassing me? I barely manage to rest after a hectic day when, once again, I find him standing at my door at dawn. Again I have to run for my life, again I have to escape—this has been going on since

eternity. I have run out of patience, I can't take it any more. I beg you, please make him understand."

It is said that God called the sun and said, "Why are you after darkness? What wrong has he done you? Why the enmity? What grievance do you have against him?"

"Darkness?" asked the sun. "I have been wandering the universe since time immemorial, but I have never come across darkness. I don't know who darkness is. Where is he? Please bring him before me so that I may ask his forgiveness, come to know him, and stay out of his way."

Infinite time has passed since this incident took place. The matter is still pending in God's files; he has still not been able to bring darkness before the sun. He never can, and this matter is never going to be resolved. How can you bring darkness before the sun? Darkness has no positive existence of its own at all. Darkness is merely the absence of light. How can the absence of the sun be brought into the presence of the sun? No, darkness can never be brought before the sun. It is even difficult to bring darkness before a little lamp, let alone the sun, which is so vast. It is difficult for darkness to penetrate the radius of light around a lamp; it is difficult for darkness to have an encounter with a lamp. How can darkness be where there is light? How can death be where there is life? Either there is no life at all, or else there is no death. Both cannot be true together.

We are alive, but we don't know what life is. And this ignorance makes us believe in the certainty of death. Ignorance is death. The ignorance of life itself becomes the phenomenon of death. If, God willing, we could come to know the

life that is within, a single ray of that knowing would destroy forever this ignorance that one can die, or that one has died at some time in the past, or that one will die at some time in the future. We don't know the light that we are, and we become scared of the darkness that we are not. We fail to become acquainted with the light that is our vital energy, our life, our existence, and we are frightened of the darkness that we are not.

Man is not mortal, he is immortal. The whole of life is immortal, but we never look at the immortality. We never search in the direction of life; we don't even take one step towards it. And since we remain unfamiliar with life, we seem frightened of death. So the question is not one of life and death, the question is only of life.

I have been asked to speak on life and death, but this is impossible. The question is only of life, there is nothing like death at all. When one knows what life is, only then does life exist, but when life remains unknown there is only death. As a problem, life and death do not both exist simultaneously. Either we know we are life, then there is no death—or we do not know we are life, and in that case death alone is, there is no life. They don't both exist together. They can't. But we are all afraid of death.

The fear itself shows we are unfamiliar with death. The fear of death has only one meaning, unfamiliarity with life. And the fact is, life is flowing within us every moment. It is flowing in every breath, in every particle, all around, within and without—and yet it is unknown to us? This can mean only one thing, that man is in a deep sleep. Only in sleep is it possible a man could remain unfamiliar with who he is. It boils down to the fact that man is deeply unconscious. It can

only mean that the whole vital energy of man is not conscious, not awake.

When a man is asleep he doesn't know who he is, what he is, where he is from—everything is lost in the darkness of sleep. He does not even know whether he exists or not. He becomes aware of his sleep only after waking up; only then he comes to know that he has been asleep. In sleep a man doesn't know he is asleep. When he was not asleep he knew he was about to sleep. And as long as he was awake he knew he was still awake and not asleep. But as soon as he falls asleep he doesn't know he is asleep, because if he were to notice that he is asleep then that would mean he is still awake, not asleep. When a man is no longer asleep, only then does he know he was asleep before. In sleep one doesn't know whether one really is or not.

Obviously, man has no idea whether he is or not, or who he is. This can only mean one thing, that some deep spiritual hypnotic sleep is surrounding him. That's why he doesn't know life itself, what life is. But we won't accept this. We'll say, "We know fully well what life is. We breathe, we walk, we rise, we sit, we sleep." A drunkard also walks, breathes, moves, talks, and so does a madman. But that does not prove the drunkard is in his right senses or that the madman is conscious.

Once, while a royal procession was passing, a man stood in the main square and began throwing stones and shouting abuse at the emperor. It was, after all, a royal pageant, so the man was immediately arrested and thrown into prison. But while the man was hurling stones and abuse at the emperor, the emperor himself was laughing. His soldiers were puzzled. His prime minister asked, "Why do you laugh, my lord?"

The emperor replied, "As far as I can see, the man doesn't know what he is doing. I believe he is drunk. Nevertheless, bring him before me tomorrow morning."

Next morning the man was brought before the emperor. The king asked, "Why did you shout abuse at me? Why did you swear at me yesterday? What was the reason?"

The man said, "Me? Swearing at you? No, your majesty, I must not have been myself; that's why I must have said such things. I was drunk, I was unconscious, I wasn't there. I have no idea what I said."

We exist as if we are not, as well. We walk and talk and love and hate, wage war—all in sleep. If anyone from a distant planet were to watch us, he would think the entire human race is behaving as one behaves in sleep, in a state of unconsciousness. In the last three thousand years man has fought fifteen thousand wars. This shows the human race is not awake.

From birth to death it is one long story of anxiety, misery, pain and death. Man doesn't find a single moment of bliss, a single spot of joy in his life. He remains completely ignorant of what joy is. Life passes and he has not a single glimpse of joy. Obviously, one cannot say man is living in awareness. Misery, pain, anxiety, sadness and insanity make up our lives, but we never notice it because people around us are also as asleep as we are.

Once in a while, when an awakened one takes birth, we who are asleep become so angry at this awakened person that we immediately kill him. We don't tolerate him for long. The reason we give for crucifying Jesus is, "Because you are an awakened man, and that is your fault. Seeing you awake, we who are asleep feel very insulted.

For people like us who are asleep, you become a symbol of disgrace. You are awake; your presence disturbs our sleep. We'll kill you." So we give poison to Socrates, we execute Mansoor. We treat the awakened ones in the same manner the inmates of a madhouse would treat someone who is not mad.

A friend of mine once went mad. He was put in a lunatic asylum. In his insanity, one day, he accidentally drank a bucket of phenyl that had been left for cleaning toilets. For fifteen days he was violently sick. He suffered from continuous vomiting and diarrhea. This brought about such a drastic change in his body that he became well—as if all the excess heat were expelled from his body. Actually he was to stay in the asylum for six months, but his stay was extended for three more months even after he became well.

These three additional months in that asylum, he told me later, were worse than hell for him. He said, "As long as I was mad, there was no problem, because everyone else was the same as I was. But when I recovered, I couldn't figure out where I was. I was fast asleep and two men jumped on me; I was going my way and someone started pushing me. I never noticed these things before because I was mad too. When I was mad I never could recognize that everyone around me was mad as well. Only when I came out of my madness did I realize that all those people were mad.

"As I ceased to be mad, I became the target of everyone there. My problem was that I knew I was quite well, but I wondered and worried what would happen to me now. How would I get out of there? My screaming 'I am not mad,' was of no avail because all madmen scream they are not mad. No doctor was ready to believe me."

We are surrounded by people who are asleep, hence we don't realize we are asleep too. We immediately kill the one who is awakened because he appears very troublesome, very disturbing to us.

A British scholar, Kenneth Walker, has dedicated a book of his to a mystic, Gurdjieff. The wording of his dedication is tremendous, wonderful. He has written, "To George Gurdjieff, the disturber of my sleep."

There have been very few people in the world who have tried to break man's sleep. But if you attempt to break anybody's sleep, he will take revenge on you. Don't ever try to waken a sleeping man, he will be at your throat. Up to now, whosoever has tried to shake man out of his spiritual sleep, we have been at his throat as well. We don't notice it because we are all sleeping too.

I have heard: A magician once entered a city. He threw some powder into a well and declared that whosoever would drink water from that well would go mad. This was the only well in the city. There was one more, but that was inside the king's palace. By the time it was evening everyone in that city became thirsty, so even at the cost of turning mad, people drank the water. How long could they hold out? They were helpless. And so by evening the entire city had gone mad.

The king and his queens were happy that they didn't have to drink the water from that well and become mad. His ministers were happy to be saved from madness as well. The palace was filled with music and celebration, but by evening they realized they were wrong. The people had surrounded the palace; they had all gone mad.

The palace guards and the soldiers of the king's army had gone mad as well. Surrounding the palace, they shouted, "It seems our king has gone mad. We cannot tolerate a mad king sitting on the throne."

From the tower of his palace the king saw there was no way to escape, that he was completely surrounded by the mad crowd. The king was terrified. He asked his prime minister what he should do. "What will happen now?" he worriedly asked. "We thought we were fortunate that we had our own well. Now we have to pay very dearly for it." Sooner or later, all kings have to pay dearly for owning an exclusive well. This is true all over the world. One who has recently become a king will certainly find his separate well proves costly tomorrow. Owning an exclusive well is dangerous.

But, until then, the king had not realized the consequences of having his own separate well. So he turned to the prime minister for advice. The prime minister said, "Now there is nothing left for which to seek advice. Just escape by the back door, drink the water of the well outside and hurry back; otherwise this palace is in grave danger."

The king asked in horror, "You want me to drink water from that well? You want me to go mad?"

"There is no other way you can save yourself except by becoming mad," replied the prime minister.

The king and his queens rushed to the city well and drank its water. That night a great celebration took place in the city. The people expressed their joy, singing and dancing the whole

night. They thanked God for restoring the king's mental state, because now the king was also dancing in the crowd and shouting abuse. Mentally, the king had become normal.

Since our state of sleep is so common, so universal, and because we have been asleep since birth, we remain unaware. In this state of sleep what do we understand about life? We understand only that the body itself is life and that one is unable to penetrate the body. This kind of understanding is similar to a man mistaking the outer wall of a palace for the palace itself, or a man walking on the parapet and thinking he is in the palace, or a man sleeping, leaning on the outer wall, thinking he is resting in the palace. One whose understanding revolves around the body is like this fool who imagines himself to be the palace's guest while standing outside its walls.

We have no access inside the body. We live outside the body. We are familiar only with the outer layer of the body; we never come to know its inner layers. We don't even know the inner sides of the palace walls, let alone the palace itself. We consider the outside of the wall to be the palace, we remain ignorant of the inside of the wall.

We know our bodies externally; we have never gone inside and seen the body from within. For example, we are all seated in this room; we can see this room from within. A man, wandering around outside, sees this house from the outside; he can't see it from within as we do. Man is not even able to see his own body, his own house from within—he knows it only from the outside. And this gives rise to the idea of death.

That which we know from without is only the sheath, it is only the outer covering. It is only the outer wall of a house, it is not the master of the house. The master of the house is within, and we never get to meet him. When we don't even know the wall from the inside, how will we come to know the master seated within?

This experiencing of life from outside becomes the experience of death. When this experience slips away from one's hands . . . The day one's vital energy contracts within—leaving the house, the body behind, and the consciousness moves inside, away from the outer wall—people looking on from outside feel the man is dead. The man also feels he is dying. He is dying, because his consciousness begins to move within, away from what he had understood as life.

The consciousness begins to move within, away from the plane where he knew life to be. On its way to the new, unknown journey, his soul starts screaming in agony, "I am dying! I am gone! Everything is sinking!"—because what he had considered as life up to now begins to sink, to drop away. People outside think the man is dead, and in this moment of death, in this moment of change, the person also feels, "I am dying! Dying! Dying! I am gone!"

This body of ours does not really represent our authentic being. Deep inside we have a kind of being which is entirely different from the body. It is totally opposite, reverse to the body. Look at a seed. It has a very hard shell which protects the tender, delicate seedling of life hidden inside it. Inside lies the very delicate sprout, and a tough wall, an enclosure, a sheath covers the seed in

order to protect it. But the sheath, the enclosure itself, is not the seed. If a man takes the sheath for the seed, he won't be able to know the sprout hidden within it. He will just cling to the sheath and the sprout will never come out.

No, the sheath, the cover is not the seed. On the contrary, the truth is that when the seed is born the sheath has to efface itself, has to burst, has to diffuse itself, has to dissolve in the earth. When the sheath is dissolved, the seed inside manifests itself.

Our physical body is the sheath containing the seed, and inside there is a sprout consisting of life, of consciousness, of being. But, taking this sheath for the seed, we ruin ourselves and the sprout is never born, the seed never sprouts. One experiences life when the seed sprouts. When it sprouts, man ceases to be a seed and grows into a tree. As long as man is a seed, he is only a potentiality, and when the tree of life is born in him, he becomes authentic. Some call this authenticity the soul, some call it God.

Man is the seed of God. He is only a seed. It's the tree that will have the experience of the wholeness of life. How can the seed have such an experience? How can a seed ever know the blissful state of the tree? How can a seed ever know that green leaves will appear someday, and that the sun's rays will dance on them? How can a seed ever know the winds will pass through the leaves and the branches, and a resounding music will emerge from their beings? How can a seed ever know that flowers will bloom, eclipsing the beauty of the stars? How can the seed ever know that, sitting on top, birds will sing and that travelers will rest in the shade? How can a seed ever know the experience a tree has? The seed

has no idea. The seed can't even dream of the possibilities awaiting when it grows into a tree. It can only realize them by being a tree.

Man doesn't know what life is because he has believed his fulfillment is in being a seed alone. He will know it only when his inner tree of life has manifested itself totally. But this is a far cry when, in the first place, we don't even realize there is something existing within that is different and separate from the body. We are never able to remember, to realize there is something different and separate from the body as well. Hence, the real issue in life is experiencing that which is within, but we believe life to be that which pervades outside.

Once I asked a tree, "Where is your life source?"

The tree replied, "In the roots, which are not visible." The life of the tree springs from those invisible roots; the tree which is visible draws life from the roots that are invisible.

Mao Tse-tung has written an anecdote from his childhood. He tells that there was a little garden close to the hut he and his mother lived in. All her life his mother had tended the garden with great love and care. People used to come from faraway just to see the large, beautiful and lovely flowers of that garden. There was never so hard-hearted a person who, passing by the garden, would not stop for a moment or two and admire such appealing flowers. In her old age his mother fell ill. Mao was very young then. There wasn't any grown-up around, but Mao told his mother not to worry about the plants and flowers. He said he would take good care of them.

Day and night, from dawn till dark, Mao would toil in the garden. Assured, the mother

rested. In fifteen days the mother recovered from her illness and came out in the garden. What she saw was awful. The entire garden had withered away. Not only were the flowers long gone but the leaves were dead too. Even the trees had become sad. The old woman must have felt the same way anyone with sight would feel looking at the garden of humanity today. All the flowers had fallen off, all the leaves had drooped, all the trees were sad. The old woman let out a violent cry. "What have you done?" she wailed. "What were you doing from dawn till dusk?"

Mao also burst into tears. He said, "I did the best I could. I used to dust each and every flower. I used to dust each and every leaf. I used to kiss each flower and spray water on each flower. I don't know what happened! I put in so much effort, and the whole garden has withered away!"

Even though she was crying, his mother couldn't hold back her laughter. "You foolish little child!" she said. "Don't you know trees never have their life-energy in their flowers and leaves? It lies in their roots, which are not visible. Your watering the flowers and leaves, your kissing them, your pouring love on them was all meaningless. Never worry about the flowers and the leaves. If the invisible roots begin to gain strength, the flowers and leaves come on their own—you don't have to worry about them."

But man has understood life in terms of the outer expanse of the flower and has neglected the roots completely. Man's inner roots are lying there, totally neglected. He doesn't even remember that he is something inner as well. And actually, whatsoever *is*, is within. The truth is within, the energy is within, all potentialities are within—they manifest from there. Being is within, becoming takes place outside.

That which is authentic is within. That which expands and manifests is without. Manifestation is all outside. Being is within. Those who take the outer manifestation as life, their entire life is threatened with the fear of death. They live as if almost dead. They are afraid they may die some day, any moment. And those very people who are frightened of death, weep and are troubled over someone else's death. Although, in fact, they don't really cry and feel troubled over anyone's death—each death reminds them of their own, and the closer the dying person, the stronger the reminder. And then a chill goes up one's spine, fear grips one, one begins to tremble. In this state a man thinks nice things. He thinks, "The soul is immortal, we are part of the divine, we are the form of *Brahman*." This is all rubbish, it is nothing more than self-deception.

To boost his strength, one who is scared of death repeats, "The soul is immortal . . ." What he is saying in effect is, "No, I won't have to die, the soul is immortal." Although his being shakes with fear, yet outwardly he says that the soul is immortal. If a man knows the soul is immortal, he doesn't have to repeat it even once. He knows. The matter is over.

These people who are scared of death continue to fear it. Meanwhile, they fail to know life and invent a new trick, a new deception that the soul is immortal. That's why it is difficult to find a nation more afraid of death than the one which talks about the immortality of the soul. That misfortune has occurred in this very country. Of all the people in the world who believe in the immortality of the soul, most are in this country. And in this country the number of cowards afraid of death is the greatest as well. How did these two things happen together?

There is no more death for those who know the soul is immortal. The fear of death has disappeared for them; now no one can kill them. You should also keep another thing in mind: neither can anyone kill them, nor can they be now under the illusion that they can kill anyone—because now, for them, the very phenomenon of death is finished forever. This secret needs to be understood.

Those who believe the soul is immortal are people afraid of death. They are merely repeating, "The soul is immortal." Afraid of death, such people will also talk a great deal about non-violence—not because they wouldn't want to kill anyone, but because, very deep down, they don't want anyone to kill them. They believe the world should become non-violent. But why? Their answer will be, "It is bad to kill anyone." But deep down they are saying, "Lest we are killed by someone." To kill is evil indeed, but if these people know there is no death at all, then there is neither room for the fear of dying nor of killing. Then such matters become irrelevant.

On the battlefield, Krishna says to Arjuna, "Do not be afraid, because those you see standing in front of you have existed many times before. You have certainly existed before, and I have too. We have all been here many times in the past and will be here many more times again." Nothing is ever destroyed in this world. Hence, there is no place for the fear of dying or of killing. The question is of living life. Those who are afraid to kill or to be killed become impotent in the eyes of life. One who can neither die nor kill has absolutely no idea that that-which-is can neither be killed by anyone nor can it ever die.

How exciting the world will be when, as a whole, it will come to know from within that the soul is immortal! That day the whole fear of death will disappear. The fear of dying will vanish as well, and the threat of killing will be gone for good. That is when wars will disappear—not before.

Wars cannot disappear from the world as long as it appears to man that he can be killed, that he can die. Regardless of how much Gandhi may teach non-violence, or Buddha and Mahavira may teach it; no matter how many lessons of non-violence are given in the world, as long as man does not experience from within that whatsoever is, is eternal, war cannot cease. Don't think those who wield swords are brave people. A sword is proof that the man is a coward. Statues in the city square of those holding swords are statues of cowards. The brave man needs no sword in his hand because he knows it is childish to kill and to be killed.

But man creates a strange deception. He pretends he knows things he is ignorant about—all because of fear. Deep down he is fraught with fear, deep down he knows he will have to die—people are dying every day. He sees his body growing weaker inside—youth has passed, old age is approaching. He sees the body is on its way out, but inside he keeps reiterating “The soul is immortal.” He tries to muster up his belief, his courage by doing so, and tells himself, “Don't be afraid. Of course death is there, but the sages, the wise men say ‘The soul is immortal.’” Around such wise men who talk about the immortality of the soul, people, afraid of death, gather in big crowds.

I am not saying the soul is not immortal. What I am saying is that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is a doctrine of those who fear death. Knowing the immortality of the soul is a totally different thing. And remember, only they can know the immortality of the soul who experiment with death while being alive—there is no other way of knowing it. This needs to be understood.

What happens in death really? The entire vital energy that is diffused, spread all around, it contracts, returns to its center. This essential energy that is reaching out to every nook and corner of our bodies, withdraws, comes back to its core. For example, if we go on dimming a diffused light, it will begin to shrink and darkness will gather. At some point the light will be reduced to the point where it comes close to the lamp itself. And were we to dim it even further, the light would be lodged in seed-form and darkness would surround you.

So the vital energy of our life shrinks, returns to its own center. Again it becomes a seed, an atom, ready for a new journey. Because of this very contraction, this very shrinkage of the essential energy, one feels, "I am dying! I am dying!" What one had taken to be life until then begins to slip away; everything begins to drop. A man's limbs start losing their strength, he begins to become short of breath, his eyesight becomes poorer, his ears become hard of hearing.

In fact, all these senses were alive, and the whole body too, because of the connection with some energy. And once the energy begins to recede, the body, which was essentially lifeless, becomes lifeless once again. The master prepares to leave and the house becomes depressed.

desolate. And the man feels, "Here I go!" At the moment of death he comes to feel, "I am going. I am sinking, the end is near."

The nervous feeling that he is dying—the worried and melancholy state, the anguish and anxiety of dying, the feeling his end is approaching—brings such terrible suffering to a man's mind that he fails to be aware of the very experience of death. To know death one needs to be peaceful. Instead, a man becomes so restless he never knows what death is.

We have died many times before, an infinite number of times, but we have never known what death is. Each time the moment of death has arrived, we have become so perturbed, so restless, so troubled—how can we have known anything in that state? What knowledge can one have had? Each time death has come—and yet we have remained unfamiliar with it.

No, death can't be known at the moment of dying, but one can certainly have a planned death. A planned death is meditation, yoga, *samadhi*. *Samadhi* means only one thing: bringing about the event that, otherwise, occurs by itself in death. In *samadhi*, the seeker brings it about with effort by knowingly drawing his entire life energy within. Obviously, there is no need for him to feel restless, because he is experimenting with pulling, drawing the consciousness in. With a cool mind he contracts the consciousness within. What death does anyway, he does himself. And in that silent state he finds that the life energy and the body are two separate things. The bulb that emanates electricity is one thing, and the electricity that is emanated from it is another. When the electricity contracts totally, the bulb lies there, lifeless.

The body is nothing more than an electric bulb. Life is the electricity, the energy, the vital force that keeps the body alive, warm, excited.

In *samadhi*, the seeker himself meets death. And because he enters death himself, he comes to know the truth that he is separate from his body. Once it is known that "I am separate from the body," death is finished. And once the separation between the body and the being is known, the experience of life has begun. The end of death and the experience of life take place at the same point, simultaneously. Know life, death is gone; know death, there is life. If understood correctly, these are just two ways of expressing the same thing. They are two pointers in the same direction.

Hence, I say religion is the art of dying. You might say, however, that I have often said religion is the art of living. I certainly talk about both things, for only one who knows how to die is able to know what life is. Religion is the art of living *and* dying. If you wish to know what life is, what death is, you will have to learn the art of withdrawing energy from your body voluntarily. Only then can you know, not otherwise. This energy can be withdrawn; it is not difficult. It's easy to pull this energy inside. This energy is diffused at will and withdrawn at will. This energy is simply an expanse of the will.

It is merely a matter of will. One just needs a determined resolve to go within. If you resolve that for half an hour you want to turn within, you want to die, you want to drown within yourself, you want to withdraw all your energy, then within days you will come close to experiencing the contraction of energy. It will be a state in which the body will lie separate from you. A deep three-

month long experiment will make you see your body lying separate from you; you can see your own body lying distant from you. First you will see from within that inside, you are standing separate—radiating, like a flame. You will see the entire body from within as you see this building. With a little more courage you can even bring this inner living flame outside, and, from outside, you can see the body lying there, removed from you.

Let me tell you an incredible experience I had. It has just occurred to me; I have never told it before. About seventeen or eighteen years ago I used to meditate until late at night sitting in the top of a tree. I have often felt the body has a greater influence over you if you meditate sitting on the ground. The body is made of earth, and the forces of the body work very powerfully if one meditates sitting on the ground.

All this talk of the yogis moving up to the higher elevations—to the mountains, to the Himalayas—is not without reason; it's very scientific. The greater the distance between the body and the earth, the lesser the pull of the earthly element on the body. So I used to meditate every night sitting in a tree. One night . . . I don't know when I became immersed in deep meditation, and I don't know at what point my body fell from the tree, but when it did, I looked with a start to see what had happened.

I was still in the tree, but the body had fallen below. It's difficult to say how I felt at that time. I was still sitting in the tree and the body was below. Only a single silver cord connected me with the navel of my body—a very shiny silver cord. What would happen next was beyond my comprehension. How would I return to my body?

I don't know how long this state lasted, but it was an exceptional experience. For the first time I saw my body from outside, and from that very day on the body ceased to exist. Since then I am finished with death, because I came to see another body different from this one—I came to experience the subtle body. It's difficult to say how long this experience lasted.

With the breaking of dawn, two women from the nearby village passed, carrying milk pots on their heads. As they approached the tree, they saw my body lying there. They came and sat next to the body. I was watching all this from above. It seems the women took the body to be dead. They placed their hands on my head, and in a moment, as if by a powerful force of attraction, I came back into the body and my eyes opened.

At that point I experienced something else too. I felt that a woman can create a chemical change in a man's body, and so can a man in a woman's body. I also wondered how the touch of that woman caused my return to the body? Subsequently, I had many more experiences of this kind. They explained why the *tantrikas* of India, who experimented extensively with *samadhi* and death, had linked themselves with women too.

During intensive experiments of *samadhi*, man's luminous body, his subtle body, cannot return without a woman's help if it has come out of the physical body. Similarly, a woman's luminous, subtle body, cannot be brought back without a man's assistance. As the male and female bodies connect, an electrical circuit is completed and the consciousness that has gone out returns swiftly to the body.

Following this event, I consistently had the same kind of experience about six times in six months. And in those six months I felt I had lost at least ten years off my life. If I were to live up to seventy, now I can only live up to sixty. I went through some strange experiences in six months—even the hair on my chest turned white. I couldn't comprehend what was happening.

It occurred to me, however, that the connection between this body and that body had ruptured, had been interrupted, that the adjustment, the harmony that had existed between the two had broken down. What also occurred to me was that the reason for Shankaracharya dying at the age of thirty-three and Vivekananda dying at the age of thirty-six was something else. It becomes difficult to live once the connection between the two bodies breaks abruptly. This explained why Ramakrishna was besieged with illnesses and Ramana died of cancer. The cause was not physical; rather, the breaking of the adjustment between their physical and subtle bodies was responsible for it.

It is generally believed that yogis are a healthy bunch, but the truth is completely the opposite. The truth is, yogis have always been ill, and have died at early ages. The sole reason for this is that the necessary adjustment between the two bodies becomes interrupted. Once the subtle body comes out of the physical body, it never re-enters fully, and the adjustment is never completely restored. But then it is not needed. There is no reason for it; it has no meaning.

With the use of will power, simply with will power, the energy can be drawn inside—just the thought, the feeling, "I want to turn in, I want to

go back in, I want to return within, I want to come back in." Were you to have such an intense longing, such a powerful emotion; if your whole being were to fill with a passionate, intense desire to return to your center; if your entire body were to pulsate with this feeling, someday it can happen—you will instantly return to your core and, for the first time, see your body from within.

When yoga talks about thousands of arteries and veins, it is not from the point of view of physiology. Yogis have nothing to do with physiology. These have been known from within; hence, when one looks today one wonders where these arteries and veins are. Where are the seven *chakras*, the centers within the body that yoga talks about? They are nowhere in the body. We can't find them because we are looking at the body from outside.

There is one other way to observe the body—from within, through the inner physiology. That's a subtle physiology. The nerves, veins and centers of the body known through that inner physiology are all totally different. You won't find them anywhere in this physical body. These centers are the contact fields between this body and the inner soul, the meeting points for both.

The biggest meeting point is the navel. You may have noticed, if you suddenly get into an accident driving a car, the navel will be the first to feel the impact. The navel will become disordered at once, because here the contact field between the body and the soul is the deepest of all. Seeing death, this center will be the first to become disturbed. As soon as death appears, the navel will be disrupted in relation to the body's center. There is an internal arrangement of the

body which has resulted from the contact between this body and the inner body. The *chakras* are their contact fields.

So obviously, to know the body from within is to know a totally different kind of world altogether, a world we know absolutely nothing about. Medical science knows nothing about it, and won't for some time.

Once you experience that the body is separate from you, you are finished with death. You come to know there is no death. And then you can actually come out of the body and look at it yourself from outside.

Questions relating to life and death are not matters of philosophical or metaphysical thought. Those who think about these things never accomplish anything. What I am talking about is an existential approach. It can be known that "I am life;" it *can* be known that "I am not to die." One can live this experience, one can enter into it. But those who only think, who say, "We'll think about what death is, what life is," may think about it a million times, may think about it life after life, but they won't know anything. What on earth is there to think about?

We can only think about something which is known to us. About something which is unknown nothing can be thought. You can only think about that which is known to you. Has it ever occurred to you that you can't think what you don't know? How can you think, how can you conceive that which you know nothing about? We don't know what life is; we don't know what death is. What are we to think? That's why I say that whatsoever the philosophers have said about life and death is totally worthless.

Whatsoever is written about life and death in the philosophy books is worth nothing, because those people have written it after a lot of thinking. It is not a question of thinking and then writing about it. Except for what yoga has said about life and death, everything else that has been said is only playing with words. What yoga is concerned with has to do with an existential, living experience.

That the soul is immortal is not a theory; it is not an ideology. It is the experience of certain individuals. Only when experience is what you want can experience alone solve the riddle, "What is life? What is death?" And as soon as you have the experience you will come to know that life is, that death is not—that only life is, that there is no death at all. Then we will be in a position to say that death just happens. And what this simply means is that we leave the house, the body we were living in, and a journey towards a new home begins. We set out, leaving one house for another. This house has a limited capability. This house is a machine. It wears out, it gets tired, and we have to go beyond it.

If science would have it so, it would be possible to keep the human body alive for one hundred, two hundred, three hundred years. But that would not prove there is no soul. It would only prove that the soul won't need to change homes anymore, that science had now worked out a way to fix the old house. Nevertheless, scientists should not remain under the illusion that by increasing the longevity of man to five hundred years, to a thousand years, they would have proved there is no soul in man. It wouldn't prove anything. It would only demonstrate that because the mechanism of the body used to wear

out, the soul had to change it. Now, if the parts of the body could be replaced—the heart, the eyes, the limbs—if they could be replaced, then the soul would have no reason to change bodies. In that case the old house would do—it is now repaired. But this doesn't even remotely prove there is no soul in the body.

It is also possible that in the near future science may succeed in creating a child in a test tube, in producing life. And then, perhaps, scientists may fall under the illusion they have created life. But that would also be wrong. Let me say this too: such an achievement won't prove anything either.

What happens when a union between a man and a woman takes place? Together, they don't create a soul in the mother's womb, they just create a situation where the soul can enter. When the two elements of man and woman meet, an opportunity is created for the soul to enter the womb. It may be that soon scientists may create a similar situation in a test tube, but that is not tantamount to creating a soul.

The mother's womb is a mechanical system too; it's a test tube. It is a natural system. Soon, with full discovery and knowledge of those chemical elements which make up the male sperm and the female egg, a scientist, in his laboratory, may succeed in producing the same chemical organization in a test tube. In that case, souls, which before had entered the mother's womb, would now enter test tubes. But even so, it would not be the soul taking birth, it would be the body—the soul would still just be arriving. The phenomenon of birth is a double event—the formation of the body and the arrival of the soul, the descending of the soul.

The future looks very dangerous and dark as far as the soul is concerned, because with each new discovery science will convince man there is no soul. But the existence of the soul will not be disproved by it, it will only weaken the will of man to turn within himself. If, because of increased longevity and the creation of test tube babies, man should come to believe there is no soul, even then the existence of the soul will not be disproved, only the continuing inner search of man will come to an end. And this unfortunate circumstance is sure to occur in the next fifty years. In the last fifty years, the ground has already been prepared for it.

There have always been poor, wretched, miserable, sick people in the world. Their lifespan was short; they neither had good food to eat nor proper clothes to wear. But from the point of view of the soul, the number of poor has never been so great as it is today. This is only because man has come to believe there is nothing within, and so, for him, the question of turning in doesn't arise. Once humanity believes there is nothing within, the whole idea of reaching inside is finished.

The future may turn out to be terribly bleak and dangerous. Therefore, experiments must be carried out in all corners of the world so that a few individuals may stand up and assert—not merely an assertion of words and doctrines, not just a reiteration of the *Geeta*, the Koran, the Bible, but a living affirmation, "I know I am not the body." And this should not be just a verbal declaration, it should be reflected through their entire way of living. Only then may we succeed in saving humanity—otherwise, the whole of scientific development will turn man into a machine, an automaton. The day man comes to

believe he is nothing more than a body, that there is nothing within him, perhaps all doors leading inwards will be shut. What will happen after that is hard to say.

Even to this day, the inner doors of the majority of people have remained shut. But once in a while a courageous person breaks through the inner walls. A Mahavira, a Buddha, a Christ, a Lao Tzu breaks through the wall and enters within. But the possibility of such a phenomenon happening again is decreasing every day.

I say: Only life is, death is not. But it may be that in the next one hundred or two hundred years man might say, "Only death is, life is not." The ground is ready for it. People asserting it have already come forward. After all, what is Marx saying? According to Marx, "Matter is, God is not. And what looks as God to you is nothing but a byproduct of matter." Marx says, "There is no life, only death is." Now if the soul is not and only the body is, then obviously there is no life, only death is.

You may not be aware of it, but what Marx has said is gaining ground. There have always been people in the world who have denied the soul, but up to now a religion was never born of these people. Up to now there never has been an organization of atheists. Charvaka, Brihaspati, Epicurus and many other such remarkable people in the world denied the existence of the soul, but they never formed any church, any organization. Marx is the first atheist in the world who created an organized church. Today, half the world is already within its fold, and the remaining half will join it in the next fifty years.

The soul exists, of course, but all the avenues through which it can be known, recognized, are

closing down one by one. Life is there, but all the possibilities of connecting with it are fading away. Before all the doors and avenues close down, those who have even a little bit of ability and courage should experiment on themselves and make an effort to turn within so they can have the experience.

If even one hundred, two hundred individuals could experience the inner flame, we will be out of danger. The darkness of millions of people can be dispelled with the inner flame of the few. Even a tiny lamp cuts through a long darkness. With the presence, in a village, of a single man who has known the immortality of the soul, the whole atmosphere, the whole vibe, the entire life of the village will change. A single flower blooms and its fragrance spreads to faraway places.

The very presence of a person who has known the immortality of the soul can bring about the purification of the spirit of an entire village.

This country is full of *sadhus*, monks and other people who make themselves hoarse shouting "The soul is immortal"—there is a whole line of them, a huge crowd. And yet, such a low moral character! Such a downfall of the country! This degradation proves they are all involved in a double-dealing business. None of these people know anything about the soul. Look at the crowd, at this queue, at this platoon of *sadhus*, at this whole great circus of *sadhus* all over the country. Some clown with bandages over their mouths, some perform acrobatics with a staff in their hands, others present yet another type of circus! Such a crowd of people know the soul and this country is in such a decline! It's hard to believe.

There are people who blame the common man for causing the moral decline in the world. I would like to say they are wrong. The common man has always been the same. In the past, around the world, the moral character was high because of a few self-realized individuals, the common man always remained the same; he has remained unchanged. There have been a few beings, of course, who always raised, always uplifted human consciousness. Their very presence has always worked as a catalytic agent and has always elevated human life.

The responsibility for the present low state of human character lies with these *sadhus*, with the so-called holy men, with the hypocrites and charlatans who talk about religion. The common man bears no responsibility for it whatsoever. Neither did he before, nor does he now.

If you want to change the world, stop talking nonsense about improving the moral conduct of each and every person, about teaching moral education to everyone. If you want to change the world, a few individuals will have to be willing to go through very intense inner experiments. Those who are ready to undergo the experiment deep within themselves . . . Not too many, just a hundred people . . . If a hundred individuals in a country reach a point of knowing what the soul is, the life of that entire country will be automatically uplifted. With the presence of a hundred shining lamps the whole country can be uplifted.

I agreed to speak on this subject only because I felt that in case some courageous man came forward, I would invite him, "Come on! If you are ready to go on an inward journey, I am willing to take you. There, it can be shown what life is and what death is."

THE ULTIMATE FREEDOM

**Opera House, Bombay
Morning of November 5, 1969**

A few questions have been asked, seeking clarification of certain points I discussed in last night's talk.

A friend has asked: If a man and a woman create an opportunity for the soul to take birth, then does it mean there are many separate souls and not one universal soul? Also, on many occasions you have said there is only one truth, one God, one soul. Aren't these statements contradictory?

There is no contradiction. Of course, God is one. The soul is essentially one too, but the body is of two types. One is the gross body which we can see, and the other is the subtle body which we cannot see. At the moment of death, the gross body falls away, but the subtle body remains intact.

The soul resides within two bodies—the subtle body and the gross body. At the time of death the gross body dies. The body which is made of earth and water, the body which consists of flesh, bones and marrow, drops, dies. Subsequently, the body comprised of subtle thoughts, subtle feelings, subtle vibrations, subtle filaments, remains. This body, formed of all these subtle things, along with the soul, once again proceeds on a journey, and again enters a gross body for a new birth. When a new soul enters the mother's womb, it means this subtle body enters.

In the event of death only the gross body disintegrates, not the subtle body. But with the occurrence of the ultimate death, what we call *moksha*, the subtle body disintegrates along with the gross body as well. Then there is no more birth for the soul. Then the soul becomes one with the whole. This happens only once. It is like a drop merging into the ocean.

Three things have to be understood. First, there is the element of the soul. When the two types of bodies—the gross and the subtle—come in contact with this element of the soul, both become active. We are familiar with the gross, the physical body. A yogi is familiar with the subtle body. And those who go beyond yoga are familiar with the soul.

Ordinary eyes are able to see the gross body. The yogic eye is able to see the subtle body. But that which is beyond yoga, that which exists beyond the subtle body, is experienced only in *samadhi*. One who goes beyond meditation attains *samadhi*, and it is in the state of *samadhi* that one experiences the divine. The ordinary man has the experience of the physical body, the ordinary yogi has the experience of the subtle body, the enlightened yogi has the experience of

the divine. God is one, but there are countless subtle bodies and there are countless gross bodies.

The subtle body is the causal body; it is this body that takes on the new physical body. You see many lightbulbs around here. The electricity is one, that energy is one, but it is manifesting through two different bulbs. The bulbs have different bodies, but their soul is one. Similarly, the consciousness manifesting through us is one, but in the manifestation of this consciousness, two vehicles are applied. One is the subtle vehicle, the subtle body; the other is the gross vehicle, the gross body.

Our experience is limited to the gross, to the physical body. This restricted experience is the cause of all human misery and ignorance. But there are people who, even after going beyond the physical body, may stop at the subtle body. They will say, "There are an infinite number of souls." But those who go beyond even the subtle body will say, "God is one, the soul is one, *Brahman* is one."

There is no contradiction in my statements. When I referred to the entering of the soul, I meant that soul which is still associated with the subtle body. It means the subtle body the soul is enveloped in has not disintegrated yet. That's why we say that the soul which attains to the ultimate freedom steps out of the cycle of birth and death. There is indeed no birth and death for the soul—it was never born, nor will it ever die. The cycle of birth and death stops with the end of the subtle body, because it is the subtle body that causes a new birth.

The subtle body is an integrated seed consisting of our thoughts, desires, lusts, longings,

experiences, knowledge. This body is instrumental in taking us on our continuing journey. However, one whose thoughts are all annihilated, whose passions have all waned, whose desires have all disappeared, who has no desire left within him, there is no place for him to go, there is no reason left for him to go anywhere. Then there is no reason for him to take birth again.

There is a wonderful story in the life of Ramakrishna. Those who were close to him, who knew him to be a *paramhansa*, an enlightened one, used to be deeply troubled about one thing. It bothered them greatly to see an enlightened person such as Ramakrishna—one who had attained *samadhi*—craving food so much. Ramakrishna used to become very anxious about food. He would often enter the kitchen, asking his wife, Sharada Devi, "What's cooking today? It's getting so late!" Right in the middle of a serious talk on spiritual matters he would get up abruptly and rush towards the kitchen asking what was being cooked, start looking for food.

Feeling embarrassed, Sharada would politely chide him, "What are you doing? What must people think—dropping the talk on *Brahman* so suddenly and starting to talk about food!" Ramakrishna would laugh and remain silent. Even his close disciples remonstrated with him. They would say, "It's giving you a bad name. People say, 'How can such a person have attained knowledge when his desire for food is so overwhelming?'"

One day his wife, Sharada, got very upset and reproached him. Ramakrishna told her, "You have no idea, but the day I show aversion to food, know that I shall not live more than three days afterwards."

Sharada asked, "What do you mean?"

Ramakrishna said, "All my desires and passions have disappeared, all my thoughts are gone—but for the good of mankind I am deliberately holding on to this one desire for food. It's like a boat tied down with one last rope. Once that rope is cut loose the boat will move on to its endless journey. I am staying on with effort."

Perhaps those around him did not give much thought to this at the time. But three days before Ramakrishna's death, when Sharada entered with a dish of food, Ramakrishna looked at it, shut his eyes, and lay with his back turned towards her. In a flash she remembered Ramakrishna's words about his death. The dish fell from her hands and she began to weep bitterly. Ramakrishna said, "Don't cry. You wished I should not crave for food—your wish has come true." Exactly three days after this incident, Ramakrishna died. He was holding on with effort to just a little bit of desire. That little desire had become the support for the continuation of his life-journey. With the disappearance of that desire, the entire support ceased to exist.

Those whom we call the *Tirthankaras*, those whom we call the Buddhas, the sons of God, the *avatars*—they hold on to only one desire. They keep the desire solely out of compassion, for the good and well-being of all mankind. The day this desire is lost, they cease to live in the body, and an endless journey towards the infinite begins. After that there is no more birth, no more death. After that there is neither one, nor many.

What remains after that cannot, in any way, be counted in numbers; hence those who know don't even say, "*Brahman* is one, the divine is one." To call it "one" is meaningless when there is no way to follow it with "two", when one can't

count any further in the sequence of two and three. Saying "one" is meaningful only as long as two, three and four are also there. "One" is significant only in the context of other numbers. That's why those who know don't even say *Brahman* is one; they say, "*Brahman* is non-dual. He is not two."

They are saying something quite remarkable. They are saying, "God is not two; there is no way you can count God in terms of numbers." Even calling him "one" we are attempting to count him in terms of numbers, which is wrong. But to experience that "one" is still a long way. Right now we are still at the level of the gross body, of the body which, endlessly, takes multiple forms. When we enter this body, we find another body—the subtle body. Going beyond this subtle body, we attain that which is not a body, that which is body-less—the soul.

What I said yesterday is not contradictory, is not paradoxical.

A friend has asked: Once the soul has left a body, can it enter into another dead body?

Yes it can. But there no longer remains any meaning, any purpose in entering another dead body: the other body was dead because the soul had found it unsuitable to reside in. The body was discarded because it had become useless, hence there is no point in entering that body. Nevertheless, it is indeed possible to enter another body.

It's no use asking, however, how one can enter another body when we don't even know

how we exist in the body we are already in. What can be gained by thinking about such worthless things as entering another body? We don't even know how we entered the body we have now. We don't even know how we are living in our body. We have never had the experience of seeing our own body separate from us.

In any case, there is no reason for entering another body; however, in scientific terms, it can be said that it is possible to enter another body—because, basically, a body cannot be seen in terms of “yours” and “mine”. All bodies are external. When a soul enters a mother's womb it is actually entering a body—a very small body, an atomic body, but entering a body nevertheless.

The cell that is created on the first day in a mother's womb contains the whole inbuilt program in itself. For example, the possibility that one's hair may turn gray fifty years from the time of conception is hidden in that tiny little seed. Potentially, the seed contains within itself what the color of your eyes will be, how long your hands will be, whether you'll have a healthy body or a sick body, whether you'll be white or black, whether or not you'll have curly hair. It is a tiny body, an atomic body. The soul enters *this* atomic body. It enters in accordance with the structure of the atomic body, with the situation the atomic body is in.

The sole reason human consciousness has been declining daily is because married couples are not creating suitable opportunities for superior souls to take birth. Whatever opportunities are being created are for the birth of inferior souls. It is not necessarily so that, following a man's death, his soul may soon find the oppor-

tunity to take birth. Ordinary souls, which are neither very superior nor very inferior, find new bodies within thirteen days from the death of the body; however, very inferior souls are stopped from taking birth because it is very difficult to find a suitable opportunity, a womb that low in quality. We call these inferior souls ghosts and evil spirits. Very superior souls are prevented from taking birth too, because they don't find suitable opportunities, wombs that high in quality, either. We call these superior souls, gods.

In the past, the number of evil spirits was very large while the number of gods was very small. In the present day, the number of ghosts and evil spirits has greatly decreased and the number of gods has increased, because the opportunity for the birth of godlike people has diminished whereas the opportunity for the birth of evil souls has increased rapidly. By entering human bodies, ghosts and evil spirits, which otherwise used to be held back from taking birth, have now all joined the human race! That's why it's so difficult to see ghosts and evil spirits nowadays. One need not see them, however. Just look at man and you have seen them!

Our belief in gods obviously declined, because how can one believe in them when they are so hard to find? There was a time when gods were as real as any other actuality of our lives. If you read the Vedic *rishis*, the sages, it doesn't seem as if they are talking about some imaginary gods. No, they are talking about gods who speak to them, who sing and laugh with them. They are talking about gods who walk very closely with them, on this very earth.

We have lost our contact with the world of gods because we don't have men among us who

can become links, who can become bridges between gods and men and let men know what gods are. And the entire responsibility for this lies with mankind's marital system. The whole marital system of the human race is ugly and perverted.

The most important thing is that we have stopped marriages resulting from love, that marriages are happening without love. A marriage devoid of love does not create a spiritual bond—a bond which is only possible with the presence of love. A harmony, a rapport, a music necessary to give birth to a great soul is not created between the man and the woman. The love between them is merely a consequence of companionship. There is no meeting of souls in their love, none of the movement that brings two beings together into oneness.

Children born of a marriage without love can never be loving, can never be godlike. They will be more like ghosts and evil spirits; their lives will be filled with anger, hatred, and violence. Even a little thing makes the difference, an incredible difference, if there is no harmony, no rapport between the man and the woman.

Perhaps it may not have occurred to you why women look more beautiful than men, why there is such roundness, such shapeliness in women. Why isn't the same seen in men? It may not have occurred to you why there is a music, an inner dance apparent in the being of a woman, and which is not seen in man. The reason is very simple, not very big really. The reason is so small you can't even imagine that the enormous difference between man and woman is based on something so tiny.

The first cell in the mother's womb contains twenty-four chromosomes of the man and twenty-four chromosomes of the woman. With the meeting of two cells, each containing twenty-four chromosomes, the first cell of forty-eight chromosomes is created. With the union of forty-eight chromosomes a female body is formed—both sides of its scale containing twenty-four chromosomes each, balanced. But the first cell of a male child consists of only forty-seven chromosomes—twenty-four on one side and twenty-three on the other. Right here the imbalance is created, the harmony is broken. Both sides of a woman's being are well balanced; hence the whole beauty of a woman—her shapeliness, her art, the juice of her personality, the poetry of her personality.

There is a slight deficiency in the personality of man. One side of his scale is made up of twenty-four chromosomes. The cell he receives from the mother contains twenty-four chromosomes and the cell received from the father consists of twenty-three chromosomes. Thus, when the twenty-four chromosomes of the mother meet the twenty-three of the father, the male body is formed. This is the reason why man remains so restless, so intensely discontented throughout his life. He is always anxious, always worried about what to do and what not to do, whether to do this or to do that. All this restlessness begins with a very small incident, having one chromosome less on one side of the scale. Man is imbalanced. A woman is fully balanced. The harmony, the rhythm is complete in her.

Such a small occurrence brings such an enormous difference. Although because of it the woman could become beautiful she could not

grow, however. An even personality does not grow, it remains stagnant. The personality of man is uneven, hence you see him racing ahead, growing. He climbs Everest, crosses mountains, lands on the moon, reaches the stars. He searches and investigates. He thinks, writes books, gives birth to religion. A woman does nothing of this kind. She won't climb Everest, land on the moon or stars; nor will she search for religions, write books or make discoveries in science. She won't do anything. The balance in her personality does not fill her with the passion to transcend.

It is man who has given rise to human civilizations—and all because of one small matter: he lacks one chromosome. Woman has not developed civilizations because her personality is complete; there is no chromosome lacking. Such a small phenomenon can cause such an enormous difference in personality! I am pointing this out because this is just a biological occurrence, because one can biologically see how such a little difference gives birth to personalities so different in character. But there are other, more profound inner differences as well.

The child born out of the union of a man and a woman shows how deeply they are in love with each other, how much spirituality exists between them, and with how much purity and prayerfulness they have come together. On this depends how superior, how great the soul is which is attracted towards them, how great the divine consciousness is which makes that body its place of residence. The human race is becoming increasingly miserable and unhappy. Deep down, the distortion of the marital relationship is the cause. Until we have redefined the meaning of marital

life and brought it to a healthy state; until we have refined it, spiritualized it, we cannot improve the future of mankind.

In this unfortunate state of affairs, those who have denounced the householder's life and those who have made a great fuss over the life of renunciation are equally responsible. Once the householder's life was condemned, we stopped thinking in that direction altogether. This is not right. I would like to say to you that very few people can reach God through the path of renunciation. A very small number of people, some special type, a few individuals of a totally different kind, reach through the path of renunciation. Most people reach God through the path of the householder and through marital relationship.

The strange thing is that even though it is simple and easy to reach through the householder's path, no attention has yet been paid to it. Up to now, religion has suffered from the extreme influence of those who have renounced the world. Religion could not evolve for the benefit of the householder. Had it been evolved for the sake of the householder, before the very first moment of birth we would have considered what kind of soul we wanted to invite, what kind of soul we wanted to beckon, what type of soul we wanted to allow to enter life.

If religion could be taught rightly, and if every individual could be given right thought, right concept and vision, within twenty years we can create a totally new generation of men. One who enters into sex without first extending a loving invitation to the incoming soul is a sinner. He is a criminal, and his children are illegitimate even though they may be born in wedlock. That man who has not given birth to his children with

an utterly prayerful and reverent heart is a criminal—and he will remain a criminal before all generations.

Our entire future depends upon what kind of a soul enters the womb. We care about children's education, about their clothes, about their health and nutrition, but we have completely given up on caring about what kind of a soul a child would have. We cannot hope for a better human race this way. So there is no need to worry much about how to enter another body; rather, be concerned about how you have entered this very body of yours.

In this respect, a friend has asked: *Can we know about past lives?*

We can certainly know about our past lives, but at present you know nothing even about this life. Knowing past lives is far more difficult. Man can, of course, know about his past lives, because once something is imprinted in the form of a memory on our minds, it is never destroyed. It always remains in our deep unconscious levels. Whatsoever we have known, we never forget.

If I ask you what you did on January 1, 1950, perhaps you won't be able to answer. You might say, "I don't remember anything. I have absolutely no idea what I did on January 1, 1950." But if you could be hypnotized . . . And it can be done easily. Thus, by making you unconscious, were I to ask what you did on January 1, 1950, you would give me the whole day's account as if the first of January were passing before your eyes right at that moment. As well, you would be

able to tell me that on the first of January your morning tea contained a little less sugar. You would also be able to say that the man who brought you tea stank with perspiration. You would be able to point out such minor details—like the shoe you were wearing was hurting your foot.

In the state of hypnosis your deeply embedded memories can be brought out. I am telling you this because I have done many experiments along this line. Anyone who wishes can be taken into his past lives; however, he will first have to regress in this life. He will have to walk the memory lane of his present life. He will have to go as far back as the point he was conceived in the mother's womb. Only after reaching that point can he step into the memories of past lives.

Remember, however, it is not without reason that nature has arranged for us to forget our past lives. And the reason is very significant. Recalling the memories of one month can drive you crazy, let alone those of past lives. Even your recollection of the memories of a single day will not allow you to survive. The whole arrangement of nature is such that it only permits as many memories as your mind can bear. The rest are thrown into a dark abyss. It's like a storehouse where we throw things that are no longer needed and shut the door. Similarly, there is a collective house of memories, a house of unconsciousness where all unwanted memories—memories no longer needed in the mind—are stored. But were a man to enter this storehouse unwittingly, without understanding, he would instantly go mad—so overwhelming are the memories.

One lady used to experiment under my guidance. She was very keen to know her past lives. I

said, "It is possible; however, you must realize the consequences—because perhaps by knowing your past lives you may become terribly worried and upset."

She said, "No. Why would I get upset? The past life is already gone. What's there to worry about now?"

She began the experiment. She was a professor in a college, intelligent, wise and courageous. Following my instructions exactly, she went into deep meditation. Slowly, she began to dig into the deeper levels of her memory, and the day she entered her past life for the first time, she came running to me. She was trembling all over, in tears. She began to cry bitterly and said, "I want to forget what I have remembered. I don't want to go any further into my past life."

I said, "It is difficult. It will take time to forget what has returned to your mind. But why are you so nervous?"

She said, "Please don't ask me. I used to think I was very pure and chaste, but in my previous birth I was a prostitute in a temple in the south. I was a *devadasi*. I made love with thousands of people. I sold my body. No, I want to forget all that. I don't even want to remember it for a second."

So anyone can enter his past life. There are ways of doing it; there is a methodology for it. The greatest contribution to mankind made by Mahavira and Buddha is not the doctrine of non-violence, their greatest contribution is the doctrine of remembering past lives. They were the first on earth to make it clear to seekers that until they had entered their past lives, they would not

be able to know what the soul is. And they helped every seeker to go back into his previous life.

Should a man gather enough courage to recall the memories of his past life, he will become a different man altogether—because he will come to see he is repeating things he has already done thousands of times before. He will see his foolishness. He will come to see how many times he has amassed wealth, how many mansions he has built, how many times he has run after prestige, honor, status, how many times he has traveled to Delhi and attained high position. He will realize the innumerable times he has done all these, and that once again he is doing the same thing. And each time, in the final analysis, the journey has proven unsuccessful.

And the journey will be unsuccessful this time as well. With the revival of this memory, his chase after wealth will instantly end, his attachment to position will disappear. The man will come to know how many women he has had relations with in the course of thousands of years, and the woman will come to know how many men she has had relations with—and that no man was ever satisfied by a woman, nor was any woman ever satisfied by a man. And yet, a man still wonders whether he should enjoy this or that woman and a woman still wonders whether she should enjoy this or that man. This has happened millions of times.

If all this is recalled, even once, a person will never repeat it again—because having repeated an act so many times, its worthlessness becomes self-evident; the whole thing becomes meaningless. Both Buddha and Mahavira conducted intensive experiments in *jati-smaran*, in recalling the memories of past lives. The seeker who

passed through these memories, even once, was transformed. He became a different man.

I can assure the friend who has asked the question that he can be taken into past life memories if he so desires. Before getting into the experiment, one needs to give it very careful consideration, however. As it is, there are already enough worries and troubles in one's present life. Obviously, it is to forget all this, to forget his days, that a man drinks, watches movies, plays cards, gambles. When a man finds it so hard to live with the memories of a single day, when he is not brave enough to face this life, how will he be able to gather the courage to recall previous lives?

You may find it strange, but all religions of the world have been opposed to alcohol. However, giving their reasons for opposing alcohol, these ordinary, absolutely stupid politicians explain to the whole world they are against it because it destroys moral character, ruins wealth and property, makes man violent. This is all nonsense.

Religions have opposed alcohol only because one who drinks does so to forget himself. And one who is trying to forget himself can never become acquainted with the soul. The very purpose of knowing oneself is to know the soul. That's why alcohol and *samadhi* became two opposing things. It has nothing to do with what the politicians are saying.

The truth of the matter is . . . And this needs careful consideration . . . Ordinarily, people think an alcoholic is a bad person. I know people who drink, and I also know people who do not drink. Based on thousands of experiences, I have found that the man who drinks is, in many

ways, far better than the one who does not. The degree of pity and compassion I have come across in those who drink, I have not seen in the non-drinkers. The sense of humility I have found in people who drink, I haven't seen in those who don't drink. The kind of arrogance I have seen in non-drinkers I have never come across in those who drink.

But these are not the reasons, normally advocated by the politicians, why religion has opposed alcohol. The reason has been that, in trying to forget himself, man gives up the courage to remember. How can one who is busy forgetting his present life remember his past ones? And how can one who cannot remember his past lives change his present one?

Consequently, a blind repetition goes on. What we have done many times before, we keep doing over and over again. It's an unending process. And until we have remembered our past lives, we will be born again and again—and will repeat the same stupidities over and over, endlessly. This boredom, this continuous chain, is meaningless—because we'll die again and again, keep forgetting our actions, and the same thing will start all over again. We will keep moving in circles like an ox at a water-wheel.

Those who have called this life *samsara* . . . Do you know what *samsara* means? *Samsara* means a wheel, the spokes of which keep revolving, keep moving up and down. I don't know why the experts in India have placed the wheel on the national flag. Perhaps they don't know, and one wonders what they think about it. Ashoka had engraved it on his *stupas*, on his Buddhist shrines, in order to remind people that life is a revolving wheel, that it is like an ox moving in

circles at a water-wheel, that things go around and around in a circle, coming back again and again to where they were before.

So the wheel is a symbol of *samsara*; it does not represent any victory march. It symbolizes life being defeated daily. It shows, symbolically, that life is a repetitive boredom, a revolving wheel. But each time we forget this fact, and start repeating ourselves with great interest and enthusiasm.

A man falls in love with a woman and begins courting her. He doesn't realize, however, how many times he has fallen in love before, how many women he has chased before. And yet, once again he approaches them and thinks that this wonderful event is happening for the first time in his life. But that sort of wonderful event has occurred to him many times before. If he were to come to know this fact, he would be like a man who has seen a movie ten or twenty times.

When you see a movie for the first time you may enjoy it. If you are shown the movie the next day you may tolerate it. On the third day you will say, "Thank you, I don't wish to see the movie any more." But if you are compelled, threatened—"If you don't see the movie the police will take you away, the police will be after you"—and like this you are forced to see the same movie for fifteen days, on the sixteenth day you will surely attempt suicide. The whole thing will have gone beyond all limits. You will cry out, "But I have seen it for fifteen days, how much longer can I see it?" And the police are on your back, forcing you to see the movie! However, if you are drugged after you have watched the movie and you consequently forget you ever saw it, the next day

you can be seen purchasing a ticket for the same movie and enjoying it greatly.

Each time a man drops one body and acquires another, the door to the memories of his previous body closes. With the new body, a new play starts once again—the same act, the same story. Once again everything is the same; everything has happened many times before. Remembering the past one comes to see that the same act has been played many times before, that the same story has occurred many times before, that the same songs have been sung many times before. Now the whole thing is beyond endurance.

Non-attachment, freedom from worldly desires, comes with remembering the past. There is no other way for one to feel aversion towards the kind of life he now leads. Non-attachment is created by reviving the memories of previous births. The reason non-attachment has declined in today's world is that there is no means available for remembering past lives.

Let me tell those friends who have raised this question that, from my side, I am fully prepared. What I am saying is not just theoretical. I am ready, with conviction, to put each and every word I've said to the test. And I'll be happy to see anyone who is ready. Yesterday, I invited those with courage to experiment with me. I was delighted to receive a few letters saying, "We are very eager to begin the experiment. We were waiting for someone to call us. You have beckoned us; we are ready." I am happy to know they are ready. My doors are open to them. I can take them as far as I would like them to go, and as far as they are willing to go. Now is the time the world needs at least a few people to attain enlightenment. Even if a few people can become

enlightened, we can destroy the entire darkness engulfing the human race.

You may not have noted it, but within the last fifty years, two experiments of an opposite nature prevailed in India. One experiment was conducted by Gandhi, while the other was carried out by Aurobindo.

Gandhi's experiment was to raise the moral character of each individual. Gandhi's experiment seemed successful, but it turned out to be a total failure. Those whose character he thought he had improved turned out to be made of clay: a slight drizzle and, in the last twenty years, all the paint wore off. We are all witness to it. Their bodies stand naked in New Delhi. All the paint and color has washed off; not a bit is left anywhere.

Whatsoever Gandhi had painted on them washed away in the rain. So long as power didn't shower down upon them their faces looked very impressive, their clothes of *khadi* looked very bright, and their caps seemed to assure people they would lift the country to greater heights. The same caps have now become worthy to be tossed into holy fires of each and every village; they have now become symbols of the bourgeoisie, of the corruption in the country. So Gandhi seemed to be succeeding but ended as a total failure. Experiments similar to Gandhi's were conducted many times before and each time, failed.

Aurobindo carried out an experiment which did not appear to be successful. He could not succeed, but he was moving in the right direction. He was experimenting to see if it was possible for a few souls to rise so high that their very presence would begin to uplift other souls, would call out to other souls and they would start rising. Is

it possible, with the rising of one man's soul, for mankind's entire spirit to be uplifted? It is not only possible, it is the *only* thing possible. There is nothing else which can succeed today.

Today, man has fallen so low that if we remain concerned with changing every individual, it will never happen. On the contrary, the greater possibility is that anyone attempting to bring about such a change might himself become like those he wants to change. It is highly possible he might become corrupt like the others.

You can see for yourselves that those who set out to serve the masses turn out, in a few days, to be their deceivers. Those who had gone out to serve others, to reform others, in no time you find that people have begun to reform them. No, that idea of changing each individual is not feasible.

The history of human consciousness shows there were times when the whole consciousness of mankind soared to such heights you can hardly imagine. Twenty-five hundred years ago India saw the advent of Buddha, Mahavira, Prabuddha Katyayana, Makkhali Gosal, Sanjaya Vilethiputta. In Greece, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus were born. Lao Tzu, Confucius and Chuang Tzu appeared in China. Twenty-five hundred years ago ten or fifteen people of such precious quality happened that, during the span of a hundred years, man's consciousness touched the heavens. A golden age seemed to have arrived all around the world. Never before was the human soul so powerfully in evidence.

Mahavira lit the divine flame within the hearts of fifty thousand people who accompanied him from place to place. Thousands of Buddha's disciples were awakened, and their light, their flame, began stirring village after village. In the

village where Buddha would arrive with his ten thousand *bhikkhus*, within three days the whole vibe of that place would change. Where ten thousand *bhikkhus* assembled and prayed, it was as if the darkness was dispelled from the village, as if the prayer was spread over the entire village, as if hearts began to bloom and were filled with fragrance for the first time.

A few people rose, and with that the eyes of those who were below were uplifted. People only look up when there is something above to see. In the present world there is nothing to see above, but there is much to see below. The lower a person falls, the bigger his bank balance, the larger his mansion, the fancier his Cadillac—so there is much to see below. Today, Delhi is way down, absolutely in the pit. If you look below you will see Delhi in the lowest region of the earth, in the lowest hell. Whoever wants to reach Delhi should descend to the netherworld, lower and lower.

There is nothing above worth seeing today. Who would you look at? Who is up there? What greater misfortune can there be that there are no longer any souls above worth seeing—such souls that, just seeing them creates a deep longing in our hearts, such souls that, just looking at them brings a cry from our whole being, such souls that just looking at them fills us with self-reproachment, make us feel: “I could have been a lamp like this. The same flower could have blossomed in me too. I could have also sung the same song. I could also have been a Buddha, a Mahavira, a Krishna, a Christ.”

Should it even once occur to you that “I could have been the same too”—of course you need someone to look up to for such an inspiration—your vital energy would embark on a

higher journey. And remember, your vital energy is always moving—if it is not journeying upward, it is journeying downward. The vital energy is never static. In the world of consciousness there is no stopping, no waiting. There is no station where you can get off and rest, whether you are moving up or down. Every moment life is in motion. The time has come for the raising of consciousness and for having these consciousnesses remain there aloft, so that others may look up to them.

I would like to start a movement throughout the world. Not of many people. I only need a few courageous individuals ready to experiment. If a hundred people in India agree to experiment and are determined to raise their consciousnesses as high as humanly possible, the entire face of India can be changed in the next twenty years.

At the time of his death Vivekananda said, "I kept calling for a hundred people to come, but they never did. I am now dying a disheartened man. If only a hundred people had come, I could have changed the whole country."

Vivekananda went on calling but the people didn't come. I have decided I won't call people. I'll search in each and every village, I'll look into the eyes of each and every man to make sure who he is. And that man who will not come in response to the call will have to be physically brought. If only a hundred people could be assembled like this, I assure you their souls will rise like Mount Everest. On that journey, the spirit, the life energy of the whole country can move ahead.

Those friends who find my challenge worth accepting, who feel they have enough courage and strength to tread a path which is absolutely

unknown, unfamiliar, to cross a totally uncharted ocean, should know within themselves that such courage and daring only exists in them because, deep down, a divine call must have come—otherwise such courage and daring is not possible. It was said in Egypt, "A person who calls for God should know that God must have called him long before, otherwise the call could not have arisen in him."

Those who feel the call from within have a great responsibility towards mankind. The need of the hour is for a few people to come forward and, in order to experience the heights of consciousness, offer their lives totally. All the truths of life, all the experiences up to this point are becoming falsities. All the heights attained so far are being taken as fantasies, are becoming myths.

One or two hundred years from now, children will refuse to believe there ever were people like Buddha, Mahavira and Christ. They will call them all merely fictitious characters. In the West, in fact, one man has written a book in which he says a man like Christ never existed. He says it's just an old play which, in the course of time, people forgot and began to look upon as history.

We enact *Ramleela* because we believe a person like Rama did exist before—and so we perform *Ramleela*. A hundred years from now children will say, "They played *Ramleela* and people got the wrong impression that Rama had lived at some time in the past." So *Ramleela*, the enactment of Rama's adventures, would precede Rama. *Ramleela* will be seen as nothing but a play which went on for a long time, and Rama will simply be remembered as an upshot of it.

Obviously, when people like Rama, Buddha and Christ cease to be recognized, how will it be possible to believe they ever existed before?

The human mind is never ready to believe there can be people with higher minds. It refuses to accept there can be someone greater. A man always wants to believe he is the greatest. He accepts someone's superiority only when compelled to, otherwise never at all. He makes a thousand attempts to find some fault, some defect in the other in order to prove he is inferior too. He is always on the lookout so that someday he can tell everyone his old image of the person is shattered, that he no longer gives him any credence because he has discovered a blemish. Essentially, the search is to find something wrong with the person. If none is found, a new wrong is invented so a man can feel comfortable in his own stupidity and feel he is doing fine.

By and by, man will deny all the great souls because their symbols, their signs, are nowhere visible. How long will images of stone convince us that Buddha and Mahavira really did exist? How long will the words of the Bible assure us of the existence of Christ? And how long will the *Bhagavadgita* be able to show that Krishna lived? Not for long.

We need people like Jesus, Krishna, Buddha, Mahavira. If we do not produce men of such caliber in the next fifty years, the human race is about to enter a very dark age. Then there is no future for mankind.

This is a great challenge for those who feel they can do something for humanity. I will move from town to town giving this clarion call. Wherever I come across eyes which I feel can become burning lamps, can be lit with the divine

flame, I am ready to put my whole effort into making this a reality. From my side I am fully prepared. Let us see if at the time of my death I also have to say, "I was looking for a hundred people, but couldn't find them."

RELIGION IS A SEARCH FOR MEDITATION

**CCI Chambers, Bombay
Evening of August 1, 1970**

Before discussing the process of entering death consciously, I would like to ask you: What is the difference between the state of unconsciousness and the state of awareness? What state of mind is called the unconscious state? In other words, what is the individual soul's consciousness like in its conscious and unconscious states?

In order to understand the states of consciousness and unconsciousness, the first thing that needs to be understood is that they are not opposite states, although normally, they are seen

as opposites. Actually, we are used to seeing life in terms of duality. First we create a division between darkness and light and then think they are two separate things. As soon as we take darkness and light to be two different things we commit a fundamental mistake. Any thought that follows this mistake is bound to be wrong; it can never be right.

Darkness and light are variations of the same thing. They are different aspects, different stages of the same thing. It would be appropriate to call darkness a deficiency of light. Light which our eyes cannot catch, light which our eyes cannot detect, looks like darkness. Similarly, we should call light a shortage of darkness—darkness which our eyes can catch. So darkness and light are not two separate things, they are varying degrees of the same phenomenon.

What is true of darkness and light is true of all other dualities of life. The same thing is true regarding the unconscious and the conscious states. You may consider unconsciousness as darkness, and consciousness as light. In fact, even the most unconscious of all objects is not completely unconscious. A rock is not all unconscious—it exists in a state of consciousness too, but the consciousness is so small it is hard to grasp.

A man is asleep, a man is awake. Sleep and wakefulness are not two different things. The same man is floating between sleep and wakefulness. What we call being asleep is also not really being asleep. For example, five hundred people are asleep in a room and you call the name "Rama" aloud. Only the person named Rama opens his eyes to find out who is disturbing his sleep, who has called him. The remaining four hundred and ninety-nine people stay asleep. Had

this man been really asleep, he could not have heard anyone calling him; he could not have recognized that his name was Rama. His sleep was actually one of the lesser states of wakefulness, or his state of wakefulness had become a little hazy, a little fuzzy.

You see a man running on the street. He has heard that his house is on fire. You greet him. He sees you and yet he does not see you. He hears you and yet he does not hear you. You ask him the next day why he didn't return your greeting and he replies, "My house was on fire. At that time I couldn't see anything except my house, I couldn't hear anything except the noise, the sound around the house, people shouting 'The house is on fire!' I am sure you must have seen me, greeted me, but I couldn't see you, I couldn't hear you." Now, was this man awake or asleep? In every sense he was awake, of course, and yet, as far as the man who met him on the street was concerned, he was almost asleep. He was more asleep than the other man, the one who heard "Rama" being called in his sleep.

So what is being asleep and being awake? The first thing I would like to say is: they are not two opposite things. Matter and God are not two opposite things. Sleep and wakefulness, light and darkness, devil and divine, good and bad, are not opposite things. But the human mind immediately divides things into two. In fact, no sooner does the mind raise a question than it divides the thing into two. The moment mind thinks, it divides into two.

To think and to divide into two constitute one and the same thing. The moment you think, you divide. Thinking is a process of division—you immediately divide into two. The more a man is used to thinking, the more he will

keep on dividing. Ultimately, he will end up with fragments and the whole will be completely lost. And the answer to every question lies in this wholeness, in this totality.

The mind is unable to find the answer to any question. In fact, it raises a number of questions from each answer it finds. No matter how significant the answer is, the mind will immediately raise dozens of questions—but it can never find an answer to anything. There is a reason for this: the answer lies in the wholeness. But the mind is helpless. It can't function without making divisions.

For example, I am sitting here talking to you. You are listening to me and you are also looking at me. The one you are looking at and the one you are listening to are not two different individuals. However, as far as you are concerned, you are looking with your eyes and hearing with your ears. You have divided me into two parts. If you were to sit close to me and smell my body, you would have divided me into three. Then you will put these three parts together and create an image of me. But that won't be my image, it will be your addition of the parts. It will be misleading. You can never create the whole by adding up the parts, because the whole is that which *was* before the parts were made.

No sooner do we ask about consciousness and unconsciousness than we have begun to divide. In my view, they are one. But when I say they are one, I do not mean they are one and the same. I am not saying consciousness itself is unconsciousness. When I say darkness and light are one, I don't mean you can walk in the dark as you do when there is light. When I say darkness and light are one, I mean existence is made of varying degrees of the same manifesting reality.

The difference consists in being a little more or a little less, in being present or not present.

Now it will be easier for you to follow me. What is this thing which appears as consciousness when it is present in a greater degree and becomes unconsciousness when it exists in a lesser degree? The name of this very element is attention. The deeper and sharper the attention, the same is the state of consciousness. Unconsciousness and consciousness are but different densities of attention. The more profound the state of attention, the same will be the consciousness. The more tenuous the attention, the same will be the state of unconsciousness. In fact, the difference between a rock and a human is that the rock does not have density of attention at any level of consciousness. At whatever level the attention becomes condensed, consciousness takes place, and at whatever level the density of attention decreases, unconsciousness occurs.

If you let the sun's rays pass through a lens, fire is immediately produced. A condensed light creates fire. When it loses its density, when it becomes tenuous, light remains. There is fire in an ember because it contains highly condensed light. Whenever light is condensed, fire is produced. When the light becomes tenuous; that is, when its density is reduced, then even fire remains just light.

As density decreases, darkness increases. With an increase in density, light increases. If we travel towards the sun, the light will keep on increasing, because the rays are very dense on the sun. As we move farther and farther away from the sun, the light will go on decreasing. At the farthest distance from the sun there will be nothing but darkness, because of the reduced density of light.

I apply the same principle to the states of unconsciousness and consciousness. The basic principle is attention. Its fluidity, density, tenuity, solidity, determine whether to call one awake or asleep, whether to call one unconscious or conscious. We must remember, however, that all these words are used in a relative sense. For example, when we say there is light in this room, it only means there is more light inside the room than there is outside. There is light in this room because it is dark outside. Were there bright sunshine outside, this room would look darker. So when we say somebody is awake or asleep, we simply mean, in comparison to someone else.

Language has its own difficulty; it would be a problem to continually express things in such comparative terms. That's why we use words in the absolute sense—which is not right. The right way is always to express in relative terms. For instance, we are all sitting here and in a way we are all awake. But that's not really true. Each one present here is awake to a respective degree. Not every one sitting here is awake uniformly. Hence it is possible that, compared to you, the person to your left is less awake, or the person to your right is more awake.

The element that moves between consciousness and unconsciousness is attention. So if we understand what attention, *dhyana* is, we'll understand what consciousness and unconsciousness means. Attention means: awareness of something. It means reflection of something in the consciousness. It is not that every moment, twenty-four hours a day, one is equally awake—it is never like that either.

As an example, it would be good to know a few things about the pupil of the eye. When you

go out in the sun, the pupil contracts because there is no need for so much light to go in. Less light is enough for you to see; hence the pupil contracts and the focus is narrowed. When you come out of bright light into a dark place, the pupils dilate and the focus is enlarged, because in order to see in the dark, more light needs to go within. So according to the degree of darkness and light it is exposed to, the pupil of the eye keeps changing its focus—the same way we keep adjusting the focus of the camera lens while shooting pictures.

Just as, every moment, one's eye is flexible, so is one's attention. You walk along a street. If the street is familiar your attention will be tenuous; if the street is unfamiliar your attention will be dense. You need not be alert if it is a street you cross every day, because, in an unconscious state, you are sure to make it. If the street is totally unfamiliar, one you have never crossed before, you will cross it with awareness. Because of the unfamiliarity of the street, great attention will be needed.

Hence, the more a man lives in security, the more unconscious he will be. In security everything is known, familiar. The more one lives in insecurity, the more aware he will be. So ordinarily, except for the moments of danger, we are never aware, we are always asleep. If I suddenly point a dagger at your chest, you will become alert at once. You will become conscious, awake, quite different from what you are now. Seeing the dagger pointed at you will create such an emergency, such a critical situation, that at that moment you can't afford to be asleep. That means you can't be sleepy in such a moment. If

you stay sleepy in such a dangerous situation you will be near death.

In that threatening moment your whole being will come to the point of crystallization, your whole attention will become condensed. Your whole attention will remain fixed on the dagger and you will become fully aware of it. It is possible this situation may last only for a second; nevertheless, the fact is, your attention ordinarily becomes dense only in critical moments. Once the danger is over, you go back to your previous state, you go to sleep once again.

That seems to be the reason danger attracts. We love to take risks. A man gambles, for example. You may have hardly given a thought as to what makes him gamble. It is the element of danger that draws him to gambling. At the moment of placing his bet, he is more aware than ever. A gambler has placed a hundred thousand dollars on a bet and is about to throw the dice. It's a very critical moment. In a blink, a hundred thousand dollars can go this way or that. At this moment he cannot afford to be asleep; he will have to be aware. That moment of betting is certain to crystallize his attention. Now this may intrigue you, but in my view a gambler is also in search of meditation. Whether he knows it or not is another matter.

A man brings a wife home. Then, as the days go by and she becomes more and more familiar, he becomes less and less attentive towards her. She becomes as well known to him as the street he crosses every day—and suddenly the woman next door looks more attractive. The reason is nothing more than the fact that her unfamiliarity excites his attention. Looking at her, his atten-

tion has to become condensed; the focus of his eye changes immediately. Actually, the eyes of husbands and wives don't change focus when they look at each other. In fact, a husband hardly ever looks at his wife; he avoids her. The way he lives and moves around her doesn't require him to pay any attention to her. Hence, in my view, the attraction for another woman or another man is really the attraction of attention. In that one moment, in that moment of thrill, the mind becomes fully aware. It has to—because only then is it possible to see somebody.

There is a chase going on—to have a new house instead of the old, new clothes instead of the old, new positions instead of the old. Deep down, all this chasing indicates a profound desire to experience a crystallized attention—meditation. And all the joys in one's life depend on how crystallized the meditation is. The moments of bliss are the moments of crystallized meditation. Hence, those who wish to attain joy must awaken. You cannot attain joy by staying asleep.

Religion is a search for meditation, and so is gambling. One who goes to battle, sword in hand, is in search of meditation too. One who goes hunting a tiger in the forest is also searching for meditation. And the one who is sitting in the cave with his eyes closed, working hard on his *agya chakra*, his third eye center, is searching for meditation as well. The search can be both good or bad, desirable or undesirable, but the search is one and the same. A search may be successful or unsuccessful, but the desire for searching is one and the same. Meditation means: the power of knowing that lies within you becomes manifest in its entirety. No part of it should

remain potent within you, in seed form. Whatever capability of knowing you have should not remain just a potential, it should become actual.

Only in that moment a person becomes fully aware does he really flower as a being. Both events occur simultaneously. For example, a tree is hidden in a seed, but potentially. It is just a potentiality; the seed can die without materializing into the tree. It is not necessary that the tree has to come out of the seed, it is simply a possibility. It is only a potentiality, not yet an actuality.

The later turning of the seed into a tree is yet another state of its being, the manifest state. It would not be wrong to say that the seed is the unmanifest state of the tree, because what appears in the form of a tree is the same as was hidden within the seed. Following the same analogy, it would not be incorrect to say that unconsciousness is the potential state of awareness, or that awareness is the manifest state of unconsciousness.

What is it that moves between these states? What was present in the seed and also exists in the tree? There must be a connecting link between the seed and the tree. There must be something that makes the journey from the seed to the tree, that exists in both. How else can there be a connection between the seed and the tree? What was hidden in the seed and has manifested in the tree? It can neither be the seed nor can it be the tree. This needs to be understood.

The third power that was hidden in the seed and which became manifest in the tree could not have been the seed alone. Then it could never have become the tree. And if it were the tree alone, how could it have been in the seed? It ex-

isted in both. That third power is the vital energy.

Awakening and unconsciousness are two states. The element that travels between the two is meditation. That's the third force, the vital energy. So, the more meditative you are, the more aware; the less meditative, the more asleep.

A rock is a sleeping God—totally asleep, absolutely like a seed, no sprouting anywhere. Man is not a tree, he is a broken seed with a tiny sprout. He has not yet become a tree, but he is no longer like a rock either. He is on a journey somewhere in between. Man is on a journey—or it would be even better to say that man is in transit, at a halting place on a journey. Man is a seed on its way to becoming a tree. He is also a sprout in between. That's all man is—a sprout, a sprouted seed. What we ordinarily know as being awake is also just a sprouting. What we call being awake is also a very blurry state.

What we call being awake is still a very sleepy state. The wakeful state in which we go about our daily routine is not very different from the state of somnambulism. In a dream, a man gets up, goes to the kitchen and drinks a glass of water, or sits at his table and writes a letter, and then goes back to sleep. He remembers nothing of this in the morning, he did it all in the dream. His eyes were open, he followed the right path, opened the door without difficulty, wrote the letter, but still he was asleep. This means that, except for a tiny little corner, his entire mind was asleep, and hence could not register his actions in its memory. So the man is at a loss in the morning to explain what happened at night.

What we call being awake is a state similar to somnambulism. If I ask what you did on January

1, 1950, you will be at a loss to answer. You may simply say, "There was a first of January indeed, and I must have done something on that day, but I have no idea what exactly." You will be surprised to know, however, that if you were hypnotized and asked the same question you could easily give a detailed account of that very day.

What occurred on that day was recorded in some corner of your mind, a corner of which even you are not fully aware. It was recorded and left unused. Similarly, the memories of our past lives are also lying there, undisturbed. We are not fully cognizant of them. In the previous life some part of our being was awake, and that part had done the recording. Now the same part is inactive, asleep; the other part is awake, active. The part which is awake in this life has no knowledge of the immense amount of work already accomplished by another part in a previous life. It is ignorant of the fact that a seed had already sprouted in the previous life and subsequently died. It has no idea at all that such an attempt was already made once before. As a matter of fact, infinite attempts have been made before.

Should you ever enter into the memories of your past lives, you will be in for a great surprise. The memories of past lives are not restricted to human lives alone. Entering these memories is very easy; one can do so without much difficulty. However, prior to many human lives, we have passed through animal lives as well. It is difficult to penetrate them because they are hidden under even deeper layers. And even prior to our animal lives, we have lived through many lives as trees as well. Penetrating them is even more difficult because they are buried even further, at deeper levels. Prior to having lived as trees, we have

gone through many lives as rocks and minerals. Memories of these lie at even lower levels. Access to them is even more difficult.

Up to now, experiments in remembering past lives have not gone beyond the level of animal life. Even the experiments carried on by Buddha and Mahavira did not go beyond the level of animal life. The memory of being a tree is yet to be revived. As for the memory of being rocks and minerals, it is still further down the road. But the memories of all these past lives are clearly recorded. This recording, however, must have taken place in a state of somnolence, otherwise one's entire mind would be aware of it.

It may not have occurred to you, but there are certain things we never forget. Why is it so? For example, let's assume someone slapped you when you were five years old. Even after so many years the incident is still fresh in your mind, and you will never forget it for the rest of your life. What seems to be the matter? At the moment you were slapped, your attention must have been very sharp. That's why the incident made such a deep impression on you. It is only natural that at the moment one is slapped, one's attention would be at its highest point. This is the reason man can never forget the moments of insult, the moments of pain, the moments of happiness. These are all intense moments. In these moments he is so filled with awareness that their memory pervades his entire consciousness, while the ordinary run-of-the-mill happenings are forgotten by him.

How are we to understand what attention is, what meditation is? Because it is an experience, to understand it is a bit difficult. If I were to stick a pin in your body what would happen inside?

All your attention would at once begin to rush to the point where the pin had stuck you. All of a sudden that point in the body would become significant. One should say, rather, your whole being would converge upon it. At that moment you would only remain aware of that part of the body where the pin was hurting.

So what really did occur in your body? Even without the pin that part of your body was there, but you were not aware of it, not cognizant of it; you didn't even know such a part existed. And then, suddenly, the pain caused by the pin created a crisis and your whole attention rushed to where the pin was hurting.

What is it that rushed towards that point? What happened inside you? How are things different now? What is it that was not present at that point a moment ago, but now is? It is the consciousness, the awareness, that was absent from this point a moment ago. Its absence made you so oblivious to that part of the body that whether it existed or not was all the same. You had no knowledge of it; it made little difference whether it was there or not. Suddenly you became aware that part also exists in your body. Suddenly it makes a lot of difference whether it exists or not. Now its existential awareness becomes apparent to you. So, attention means awareness.

There can be two kinds of attention. This also needs to be understood, because it will be useful in following your question.

There are two kinds of attention. One, we may call concentration. In order to understand what concentration is, it is necessary to know that when your attention is centered on one point you become oblivious to all other points. As I

mentioned earlier, if a pin is thrust into your body, your entire attention will go to the point where the pin is hurting. You will become unaware of the rest of the body.

In fact, a sick person remains aware only of those parts of his body which are not well. He begins to live only in and around the afflicted parts of his body; the rest of the body does not exist for him any more. One who suffers from a headache becomes identified with the head alone; the rest of his body ceases to be. One whose stomach hurts, his whole attention centers only on the stomach. If a thorn pricks your foot, the foot becomes everything. This is concentration of attention.

This is how you bring all your consciousness to one point. When the entire consciousness converges on one point and rests there, obviously all other points become negated, disappear into darkness. As I pointed out earlier, when someone's house is on fire, he becomes oblivious to everything but the fire. He only knows his house is on fire; everything else is dead as far as he is concerned. The only thing he remains aware of is that his house is on fire. He becomes unconscious towards the rest of the world.

So, concentration is one form of attention. In concentration you become centered on one point while remaining unconscious of the infinite number of other areas. Hence, although concentration is the density of attention, at the same time it is the expansion of unconsciousness too. Both things happen simultaneously.

The other form of attention is awareness—not concentration. Awareness means attention which is not centered on any particular point. This is a little difficult to understand, because we

only know the pointed attention. A man knows about the thorn hurting his foot, the headache, the house on fire, the taking of an examination and so on, so we know attention directed towards a particular point; we know what concentration is. But there is one other kind of attention which is not focused on a given point. As long as a man's attention is narrowed down to a particular point, he will be unconscious of the remaining areas.

If we believe God is, then he must indeed be an awakened God, fully aware. But what would he be aware of? And should there be a point of which he is aware, then he would obviously have to be unconscious of all the rest. So there can't be any object, any center of awareness as far as God is concerned. It's an awareness without a center. In such a case, awareness becomes infinite, all pervading.

This all-pervading awareness is the ultimate state, the highest possible. That's why, when we define God as *sat-chit-anand*, the word *chit* means this state of being. Ordinarily, people take *chit* to mean *chetana*, consciousness, which is not really its meaning, because consciousness is always *about* something. If you say, "I am conscious," then it can be asked, "Conscious about what?" *Chit* means object-less consciousness. It is not consciousness aimed at something, it is just a pure state of being conscious. Consciousness will always be object-centered, while the state of being conscious is centrifugal, radiating into infinity. It does not rest on anything; it does not stop at anything, it pervades all over.

In this state, which extends to infinity, there is no single point where unconsciousness can gain a foothold. This is the ultimate state. We

may call it the state of total awareness. There is a state exactly opposite to this which we call *sushupti*, the state of total, dreamless sleep. And this needs to be understood too.

In concentration, one's consciousness is centered on one object, unconscious of the rest. Awareness is centered on one point only. In the state of total awareness, however, there is no particular point to be aware of—the awareness is all-permeating. One should say there is just awareness, not an awareness of a particular object. In the state of total awareness the object disappears, only the subject remains. Only the knower remains; that which is to be known remains no more. The knower alone remains. The energy to know spreads into infinity and no longer is there anything left to know.

There is always a price for whatsoever knowledge one wishes to attain. If you want to know about something, you will have to be ignorant of something else. Remember, it is with ignorance that one always pays the price of knowing. As man goes on becoming knowledgeable of many things, he has to remain equally ignorant of many others. Now, for example, a scientist is quite a knowledgeable person, but if he is a chemist he will know nothing about physics, if he is a mathematician he will know nothing about chemistry. If he wants to know a great deal about mathematics, he will have to be content with not knowing about many other things. He will have to make this choice. If you want to be an expert in a particular field, you will have to have the courage to remain ignorant about many other things.

That's why Mahavira and Buddha were not men of knowledge in this sense. They did not

have any specialized knowledge; they were not experts in any field. Hence, on the one hand we say Mahavira was omniscient, but the fact is he didn't even know how to fix a puncture in a bicycle tire. He was not a specialist. One who needs to know how to fix a puncture in a bicycle tire will have to keep himself from knowing about many other things. His consciousness will have to become object-centered and allow many things to be left in the dark.

The very meaning of science is knowing more and more about less and less. As the amount of knowledge grows, the area of knowledge becomes more and more narrow. Finally, only one point remains to be known and the rest of the areas are filled with ignorance. That's the reason a scientist who may be able to produce a hydrogen bomb can be easily fooled by an ordinary shopkeeper—because whatsoever he knows is in such a limited sphere that he knows nothing about the rest. About the rest he is as dull as a villager, even worse. A villager knows about a good many things; he is not a specialist. That's why an old-fashioned man knows about many things while a modern man does not. The modern man has had to make a choice. In order to know a lot about one thing he has had to give up knowing about many other things.

Concentration is bound to end up like this. One particular object will gain importance while all remaining objects will fall into neglect. Yet another result of concentration is that the more an object grows in importance, the more the one who knows about it becomes secondary. A scientist knows a great deal, but he has no knowledge of the knower, of the knowing element within himself. He becomes object-centered. If you ask

him about an object he will explain it to you, but if you ask him to say something about himself, you will often times find him at a loss.

There is an interesting episode in the life of Edison, who made a thousand discoveries. Perhaps no one else has made so many discoveries. In the First World War, when rationing was introduced in America, Edison had to bring his ration card to the shop and stand in the queue as well. When his name, Thomas Edison, was called out, he looked around with indifference, as if someone else's name was being called. Somebody in the queue happened to recognize him. He came up to him and said, "Pardon me, I have seen your photograph in the newspapers. You yourself seem to be Edison."

Edison gave a start. He thanked the man for reminding him who he was. He said, "In the last thirty years I have had little free time or leisure to meet myself." For thirty years this man had been so busy in his laboratory that he had no time for himself. He was such an important figure that in thirty years no one had ever called him by his given name. Obviously, he had forgotten it.

Concentration happens when the arrow of consciousness strikes an object with great intensity. With that, however, the entire world, including one's own self, falls into darkness. In the ultimate state that I am speaking to you about the particular object will have vanished; instead, everything will be illuminated, including yourself, including that which you are. It will be an unfocused light. Instead of calling it "light", we should rather call it "luminosity".

"Light" and "luminosity" are not synonymous; there is a slight distinction between the two. What appears with the sunrise is light, but

when the night is past and the sun is yet to rise what then appears is luminosity. It is unfocused, uncentered, just luminosity. So, God is just luminosity—or, luminosity is the state of ultimate awakening. Exactly opposite to this is the state of darkness or of dreamless sleep.

Let's put it this way. In the state of total awareness neither the subject nor the object remains. What remains is just infinite luminosity. In a manner of speaking, this luminosity is a state of knowing all, but in another sense, it is a state of knowing nothing at all. It is all-knowing, because now nothing remains that falls outside the radius of its light. And it knows nothing, because now there is nothing left which needs to be known. If one attempts to know something in particular, many other things will obviously be left unknown. So this is not the kind of knowledge that is acquired by a scientist, it is knowledge in the sense a poet is known to have it.

The second common state of awareness is that of concentration, where you know about one thing and forget about all the rest, including yourself. And there is yet another state which comes before this. It is the primary state in which you know neither the object nor yourself. It is the state of total darkness. Neither do you know about anything—it is not even concentration; nor do you know about everything—it is not even awareness. Nor do you know yourself. The knowing is still in the embryo state. It is still in seed form; it is still unmanifest, hidden in the roots.

So there is *sushupti*, the state of dreamless sleep, and there is the state of total awareness. In between these infinite points of attention we oscillate. When you are aware in the day, the pen-

dulum of your attention swings a little towards awareness. At night, when you are asleep, it swings towards *sushupti*.

The fact is, in sleep we come nearer to matter. When we are awake we come closer to the divine, just a little closer. We swing towards God. Should we continue to lean towards awareness like this, should this journey continue, then a moment comes when even in sleep, you are not really completely asleep. Then you begin to remain aware even in your sleep. Then sleep becomes merely a physical relaxation, not a state of spiritual darkness. Then you sleep and, as well, remain aware of the fact that you are asleep. You turn in your sleep and know that you are doing so. Then the current of awareness keeps flowing within. The reverse happens too.

For example, a man falls into a coma or becomes unconscious or gets drunk. In all these cases the man is unaware of what is going on outside or inside himself. The knower, as well as that which is to be known, are both lost, lost in darkness. Similarly, both disappear in the state of ultimate consciousness as well, but they disappear in infinite light.

If you understand what I am saying, then, in brief, it means that the journey of attention extends from total sleep to total awareness. In between, it is divided at many levels.

A tree knows something too. For a long time we had no knowledge of this fact. When some people brought this to our attention for the first time, it seemed as if they were talking fiction; what they said sounded like a story from the *puranas*. But now, even scientists are providing proof that a tree knows as well, that a tree listens too. The bark of some trees also has eyes—not

like ours of course, but nevertheless, trees have the ability to see, to listen, to experience.

Recently, I was reading about some experiments conducted at the De La Warr Laboratory of Oxford University. Through scientific means they have brought certain astonishing experiences to our attention. One of the most amazing experiences was that seeds from one packet were divided equally and sown in two separate flower pots. Both pots were given equal care and attention. Then a holy man, a monk, was asked to pray before one of the two pots so its seeds should sprout early, so they should bear flowers and fruit and attain to their ultimate potential. The same prayer was not made before the second pot.

To everyone's great surprise the seeds in the other pot sprouted very late in spite of the fact that all arrangements for both pots were the same; there was not the slightest difference. The gardeners were neither informed of the difference nor given any instructions to treat them differently. Nevertheless, the pot which had been prayed over looked very distinguished. The seeds in it grew early, bore flowers and fruit early. All its seeds sprouted, while all the seeds of the other pot did not. Whatever seeds grew in the second pot took the normal time; their growth was slower. And there was a marked difference in the quality of flowers and fruit.

This experiment and many others were conducted in this laboratory, and to everyone's surprise it was felt that plants are able to sense prayer too, that they are receptive to prayer too. An even more surprising experiment took place, one which caused great excitement. The holy man who was asked to pray was a Christian and

he wore a cross around his neck. As he prayed for a particular seed with his eyes closed and his arms raised, the seed was photographed. And the photograph turned out to be spectacular, far beyond anyone's comprehension. In the photograph of that seed the holy man's cross and raised arms were clearly visible.

What does this mean? There are very wide implications. I believe these experiments will prove much more useful to mankind than the discovery of atomic energy. The seed is accepting, the seed is receiving something too. The seed has a consciousness too. Indeed, it is asleep. Compared to man it looks even more asleep. And yet, there is a certain awareness in its state of sleep.

A rock looks even more asleep, but even its state of sleep contains a kind of awareness. Not all rocks are absolutely rocks, and not all rocks are equally asleep. Rocks have their respective individuality too. It was the search for their respective singularity that led to the discovery of precious stones; otherwise they would not have been found. Not just any stone is taken to be a precious stone. Also, don't be under the wrong impression, normally created by applying the law of economics, that certain things become valuable because of their rarity. This is not how these stones are valued.

It is as if a Buddha is standing somewhere and an ordinary man stands near him. If someone from Mars were to land on earth and come across these two men, how would he differentiate between them? He neither knows our language nor our culture nor our manners. He will only judge by appearances. If the Martian were to spend an hour or so watching these two men,

would he ever observe any distinction between the two? Returning to his planet, he would not be wrong if he told his fellow Martians he had seen two people who looked very much alike. He had seen them both breathing, walking, talking, resting—and all alike. So when we see two pieces of stone, our understanding is similar because we are unaware of their individualities.

Precious stones are a great discovery of man. Those who were able to read the stones in depth, able to go deep in their research, to connect with them, found out that, even with stones, there are some which are awake. Certain stones are more awake; certain others, more asleep. People also came to know that certain stones are awake in a particular direction and can therefore be used only for particular reasons.

Some unprecedented events will start taking place in your life if you carry certain kinds of stones, make a charm of them, wear them in a necklace or mount one in your ring—because such stones have their own lives too. With the ownership of a stone of that kind incidents will inevitably occur, because now you are in a symbiotic relationship with the stone. Without it such incidents would not happen.

There are stones which have a long history of misfortune. Whosoever possessed such a stone found himself in difficulty, found it hard to get out of it. And whenever the stone passed to someone else, he got into trouble too. There are stones which have a history of hundreds of years, and some of thousands of years, showing that whosoever possessed them was besieged by trouble. These stones are still very much alive, still doing their job; they will cause trouble to anyone who possesses them. Then there are other stones that

have brought good fortune to those who owned them, and became more and more costly. So stones have their own individuality, as do plants.

In this world everything has individuality. And this individuality depends on the degree to which a thing is awake or asleep. In other words, to what extent the attention is active or inactive determines the individuality of a particular thing. You can look at it this way too: a dynamic attention means awareness, while a passive attention means sleep, unconsciousness. The ultimate passivity of attention is matter, the ultimate dynamism of attention is God.

You have described two states, one of complete unconsciousness and the other of absolute awareness. One travels from complete unconsciousness to absolute awareness. The question is, where do we reach after attaining the state of absolute awareness? Also, from which point does the complete unconsciousness begin, and where does it come from?

Actually, as soon as we use the word "absolute" or "whole" we need to take a few conditions that go with it into account. For instance, it is wrong to ask "Where does wholeness end?" because wholeness means that which can never come to an end. Should it ever end somewhere it will not be whole. It will remain confined at that very point; right there it will cease to be whole.

When we ask, "From where does wholeness begin?" we are asking a wrong question, because

the whole means that which has no beginning. If it has a beginning then it cannot be whole. The whole, the absolute is beginningless and endless. It neither has a beginning before nor an end afterwards. If there were "ends" on any side it would not be the whole. Therefore, we can't ask any questions about the beginning or the end of the absolute. If one needs to ask a question at all, then one should only ask before he comes to the question, "What is whole?" As such, the very meaning of "whole" is something about which all questions are meaningless.

Questions occur in our minds: "Where did this unconsciousness come from? Why did it come? When did it come? Where will it end? Why will it end? When will it end? Where in existence is this state of consciousness located? And where in existence could the state of complete unconsciousness be?" It is natural that questions such as these should arise. The questions are perfectly consistent, yet totally meaningless.

One should not be under the illusion that just because a thing is consistent it is also meaningful. A thing can be consistent and yet meaningless. So the questions are absolutely pertinent but the answers will have no meaning, will solve nothing. Whatsoever answer there may be can only give rise to more questions of this nature. So what do I intend to tell you?

There are certain questions you never ask a scientist. Why not show the same attitude towards a religious man? There are certain things a scientist is never asked to explain. Why are they asked of a religious man? A scientist refuses to answer such questions, while the silly religious man commits the mistake of answering

them. All religions make this error. By answering such questions—questions which cannot be answered in the first place—they get themselves into trouble.

For example, if you ask a scientist, "Why is a tree green?" he will answer, "Because the tree contains chlorophyll." And if you ask, "Why does the tree contain chlorophyll?" the scientist will disregard the question—it is a fact; that's the way it is. He will point out, "The tree is green because it contains chlorophyll!" If you continue to ask, "Why can't the tree be without chlorophyll?" the scientist will state frankly, "I am not the creator, and there is no answer to this question!"

In this way, science escapes falling into stupidities. It leaves everything to the facts. "This is how it is; these are the facts." The scientist says, "When we mix hydrogen with oxygen, water is created." No one goes on asking him, "Why is it so? Why is water created by mixing hydrogen and oxygen?" He will simply make it clear. "The question doesn't arise," he will say. "We know this much, that by mixing both, water is created; by not mixing them, water is not created. This is a fact. Beyond this, fiction begins."

If we could give an explanation as to why such-and-such a thing happens, then I would like to say that, in this world, there is unconsciousness and there is awareness. This is a fact and, as yet, no way has been found to go beyond them. And I don't think a way can ever be found. This is the ultimate fact.

There is darkness at one end and light at the other. Eventually darkness disappears into infinity, and one never knows where it began, where its point of initiation was. Light eventually

disappears into infinity too, and one never knows the point of its disappearance. And we are always in the middle; we can only see a short distance in either direction. As we look backward we find darkness increasing, becoming more and more dense. As we look forward we find darkness decreasing and light growing, becoming increasingly dense. But we never see either the end of darkness or of light. Nor do we see any beginning of darkness, nor any termination of light. This is how we are situated—in the middle. No matter how far we look, this is all we see.

Even the most farsighted man has not seen farther than this. What causes the difficulty? When we form a question, some fool turns up to answer it. Once a question is formulated, someone or other is bound to come up with an answer for it. This is how philosophy has come about. Philosophy is made of foolish answers to foolish questions. And the questions remain, right where they always were.

There can be different answers to each question, because each answer reflects an individual's perception. In answer to the question, "Who created man?" someone can say, "God created man." But so what? We can ask, "Why did God create man? Why did he create him the way he did? Why did God create man in the first place?" This would leave the matter right where it is. Finally one might say, "Well, this is the way he does it!"

If this is the answer we are going to get ultimately . . . Someone might say, "It is all *maya*; it is beyond comprehension." On the one hand this man is saying that everything is beyond comprehension, that it is all an illusion, *maya*; however, when he is talking about everything being an illusion, he is saying something

which is actually coming out of his understanding. He appears to have fully understood that everything is *maya*, that everything is beyond comprehension. If everything is indeed beyond comprehension, then he needs to shut up; then he need not say all is *maya*. How can there be an answer if it is really beyond comprehension? So one must keep quiet; there is no need to answer.

Some people say God created man so man can attain God. What foolishness! If this were really true then why didn't he create man as a god in the first place? Where was the need to go through all this trouble? Someone else declares, "This whole thing goes on to fulfill the unfinished *karmas* of previous lives." But then it can be asked, "There must have been a first life without any other life preceding it. Then what fruits were we reaping in that initial birth?" Obviously it was without cause.

In my view, no philosophy has ever provided any answer to the ultimate questions. All philosophies are fundamentally dishonest. But the dishonesty is hidden very deep. And once this basic dishonesty escapes your notice, the remaining structure will look very convincing; you won't find any difficulty. Once you have accepted a lie—the first lie—all the following lies will appear as truths. Once a person believes that God is the creator, the matter ends right there. But how do we know God is the creator? If this question arises even once, it means the matter has remained right where it is—it has neither begun nor ended. In my view, religion should also be perceived as a science.

Some time before his death Einstein was asked, "How do you differentiate between a scientist and a philosopher?" Einstein replied, "I call that man a scientist who, when asked one

hundred questions, answers one and shows his ignorance about the remaining ninety-nine. And about the one he answers, he will make clear that it is all that is known at this point. It may change with a new discovery in the future. It is not the final statement."

Science never makes any final statement. That's why there's a kind of honesty in science. So Einstein said, "If you ask a philosopher a hundred questions, he will give one hundred and fifty answers. He will consider each answer absolute, as if no change can ever occur." Whatsoever a philosopher says is to be taken as conclusive; anyone doubting it can suffer the fires of hell. For a philosopher, his theory is irrefutable.

The way I look at it, we should be able to create minds that are both scientific and religious at the same time. This is my approach. Although I talk all along on religion, my outlook is always scientific. Therefore, I have no answers to the ultimate questions; there cannot be any. If an answer does come, then know well the question is no longer the ultimate question—it must be a question somewhere in between, a question for which the answer has been found. The matter will be argued, carried further.

The ultimate question is one which remains in spite of all answers. The ultimate question means that no matter how many questions are raised, after you are through answering them, you will find the same question awaiting you, the question mark still staring you in the face. You may just succeed in pushing the question a little further back—that's all.

You may have seen a Japanese doll. No matter how you toss it, it always stands upright. The doll is called Daruma. It is named after an Indian mystic, Bodhidharma. From India, Bodhidhar-

ma went to China, and in Japanese the name Bodhidharma became Daruma, and that's how the doll came to be known as the Daruma doll. No matter what anyone did to Bodhidharma, he remained as he was. This doll is modeled after him. Regardless of how you throw it, toss it, it stands erect, in place.

The ultimate questions are like the Daruma doll, like Bodhidharma. Do what you will, they stay right where they are. At the most, depending on how and where you throw them, their positions may change. You may keep tossing the doll for the rest of your life. You will be tired, not the doll. It will keep standing upright, in place.

These are ultimate questions. When we ask what existed before the absolute, the whole, and what exists beyond, the question becomes meaningless. I can tell you only this much: darkness, unconsciousness extends to the rear, while there is an expanse of light, of consciousness ahead of us. I can tell you this also: as darkness decreases, bliss increases. And I can mention this as well: with the increase in darkness, misery grows. These are facts. If you wish to choose misery you can go back towards darkness and unconsciousness. If you wish to choose bliss, you can move ahead towards light, towards the ultimate light. And if you wish for neither, you can stand in between and indulge in thinking about what was before and what is ahead.

At the Dwarka meditation camp you said meditation and samadhi constitute a voluntary, conscious entering into death, and in doing so the delusion of death disappears. Now

the question is, who is deluded? Is it the body, or is it the consciousness? Since the body is merely a mechanical device, it cannot experience such delusion. And there is no question of consciousness being deluded. Then what is the cause, the basis of this delusion?

The awareness of death . . . If a man can die in the state of consciousness, for him death exists no more. In other words, if a man can manage to remain conscious at the time of death, he finds he never died at all; death appears just a delusion to him. Death proving to be a delusion does not mean, however, that death remains in some form as a delusion. Rather, when a person dies fully conscious, he finds there is no death at all. Then death becomes a falsehood.

But it is natural for you to ask, "Who is deluded?" You are right in saying it cannot be the body, because how can the body feel delusion? It cannot be the soul either, because the soul never dies. Then who goes through the delusion? It is of course, neither the soul nor the body. As a matter of fact, the individual never feels the delusion of death, the illusion of death is a social phenomenon. This needs to be understood in a little detail.

You see a man dying, and then you think he is dead. Since you are not dead you have no right to think this way. It is very foolish on your part to conclude that the man is dead. All you ought to say is, "I am not able to determine whether he is the same person in the way I knew him before." To say anything more than this is dangerous, is crossing the limits of propriety.

All one ought to say is, "Up to yesterday the man was talking, now he no longer talks. Before he used to walk, now he walks no more. Up to yesterday, what I had understood as his life exists no more. The life he lived up to yesterday is no more. If there is any life beyond that, then so be it; if there isn't, then be that as it may." But to say "The man is dead" is going a little too far; it is going beyond limits. One ought to simply say, "The man is no longer alive." As one knew someone to have life, he no longer has it.

This much of a negative statement is fine, that what we knew as his life—his fighting, his loving, his eating, his drinking—is no more, but to say the man is dead is making a very positive assertion. We are not just saying whatsoever was present in the man exists no more, we are saying something has happened over and above this—the man is dead. We are saying the phenomenon of death has also occurred. It might be fine if we said that the things that were happening around this man before are no longer happening. We are not only saying that, but also that a new phenomenon has been added: the man is dead too!

We who are not dead; we who have no knowledge of death, crowd around the person and pronounce him dead. The crowd determines the man's death without even asking him, without even letting him vouch for it! It is like a one-party decision in court; the other side is absent. The poor fellow has not even had a chance to say whether he is indeed dead or not. Do you follow what I mean? Death is a social illusion. It is not that man's illusion; his illusion is altogether different.

His illusion is not of dying. His illusion is how he can expect to remain awake at the moment of death when he has lived all his life in the state of sleep? It is obvious. How can one who is used to spending his whole day in a state of sleep, stay awake—when he is actually asleep? This means that one who is already asleep even when he is awake, will most certainly be fast asleep in his sleep. How can one who cannot see in the bright daylight see in the darkness of night?

Do you suppose one who failed to see what life is like even in his wakeful state, will be able to see what death is? In fact, as soon as life slips through his hands, at that moment he will be lost in deep sleep. The fact of the matter is that, outwardly, we feel he is dead, but this is a social determination, which is wrong. Here the phenomenon of death is being determined by those who are not qualified. No one in the crowd is a right witness because no one really saw the person dying. No one has ever seen a person dying! Never has an act of *dying* been witnessed by anyone. All we have known is that until a given moment a person was alive, and then he was no longer alive. That's it; beyond this there is a wall. So far, no one has ever seen the phenomenon of death.

Actually, the problem is that once things are accepted for a long time, we stop thinking them over. For example, you will immediately take exception if I say that no man has ever seen light. But I maintain that no one has ever seen light. We have, of course, seen lighted objects, but never light itself. We say there is light in this room because the wall is visible, because you are visible. An object shines in the light, but light itself is never seen.

Light is always an unknown source. Certain things shine in it, and because of that we say there is light. When objects do not shine we say there is darkness. We have never seen darkness either. Obviously, how could one who has never seen light have ever seen darkness? If light were visible one could understand, but how can darkness be seen?

Darkness simply means, now nothing is visible. The deeper meaning of darkness is, now nothing is visible to us. It would be better to say, "We cannot see anything." This would be a statement of fact. But to say "There is darkness" is absolutely wrong. This way, we are turning darkness into an object. So the right thing to say about darkness is, "I cannot see anything." However, just because *I* am unable to see anything does not mean there is darkness. Saying "I can't see anything" means the source that made everything shine has become dull. Now, since things are not visible, it is therefore dark.

A person who has, all along, taken his life to be nothing but eating, drinking, sleeping, moving about, quarreling, loving, making friends, creating enmity, all of a sudden, at the moment of death, even he finds life slipping away through his fingers. What he had understood as life was not life at all. They were just acts, visible in the light of life. Just as objects are seen in the presence of light, the person, in the same way, had seen certain things when the light within him was present. He had eaten food, made friends, created enmity, built homes, earned money, risen to high position—all these were things seen in the light of life. Now, at the moment of death, he finds them slipping away.

So now the person thinks he is gone, he is dying, that life is lost forever. He has seen other people dying before and the social illusion that man dies is stuck in his mind as well. So he feels he is dying. His conclusion is also part of that social illusion. He comes to feel he is dying just as others before him have died.

He sees himself surrounded by his loved ones, his family and relatives crying bitterly. Now his illusion begins to become confirmed. All this creates a hypnotic effect on him. All these people . . . The situation is just ideal—the doctor at his side, the oxygen ready, the whole atmosphere of the house changed, people in tears. Now the man seems certain of his death. The social illusion that he is dying grips his mind. His friends and relatives around him begin to cast a hypnotic spell on the man that he is just about to die. Someone feels his pulse. Someone else recites the *Bhagavadgita* or whispers the *namokar mantra* in his ear. All of them thoroughly convince the man he is about to die—that whatsoever has been done before with a dying man, they are now doing the same with him.

This is social hypnotism. The man is now fully convinced he is about to die, that he is dying, that he is gone. This hypnosis of death will cause him to become unconscious, frightened, horrified; it will make him shrink, feeling "I am about to die, I am about to die. What shall I do?" Overcome with fear he will shut his eyes, and in that state of fear he will become unconscious.

In fact, falling unconscious is a device we use against things we are afraid of. You have a stomach ache, for example, and if the pain becomes unbearable you will fall unconscious. That is just a trick on your part to switch off your mind, to

forget the pain. When the pain is too much, falling unconscious is a mental trick—you don't want to suffer the pain any longer. When the pain doesn't go away, the only other alternative is to switch off one's mind. One "turns off" so one remains unaware of the pain.

So, falling unconscious is our unique way of dealing with unbearable pain. Remember, however, there is nothing like unbearable pain: you only feel pain as long as it is bearable. As soon as the pain reaches the point of becoming unbearable, you are gone; hence you never feel unbearable pain. Never believe a word of it if someone says he is suffering from unbearable pain, because the person talking to you is still conscious. Had the pain been unbearable he would have been unconscious. The natural trick would have worked and he would have lost consciousness. As soon as a person crosses the limit of endurance he falls unconscious.

Even minor illnesses frighten us and we become unconscious—what to say about the terrifying thought of death. The very idea of death kills us. We lose consciousness, and in that unconscious state death occurs. Hence, when I say death is an illusion I do not mean it is an illusion that happens either to the body or to the soul. I call it a social illusion—one which we cultivate in every child. We indoctrinate every child with the idea, "You are going to die, and this is how death occurs." So by the time a child grows up he has learned all the symptoms of death, and when these symptoms apply to him he just closes his eyes and becomes unconscious. He becomes hypnotized.

Contrary to this is the technique of active meditation—a technique of how to enter death

consciously. In Tibet this technique is known as *Bardo*. Just as people hypnotize a man in his dying moment, similarly, people involved in *Bardo* give anti-hypnotic suggestions to a dying man. In *Bardo*, people gather around a man in his dying moments and tell him, "You are not dying, because no one has ever died." They give him anti-hypnotic suggestions. There will be no weeping, no wailing; nothing else will be done. People will gather around him and a village priest or monk will come and say, "You are not dying, because no one has ever died. You will depart relaxed and fully conscious. You will not die, because no one ever dies."

The person closes his eyes and the entire process is narrated to him: now his life-energy has left his legs, now it has left his hands, now he cannot speak, and so on—and yet, the man is told, he still is, he will still remain. And all around him these suggestions are given. The suggestions are simply anti-hypnotic. That means, they are meant to make sure the person does not grab on to the social illusion that he is on the verge of dying. In order to prevent him from doing that, people use *Bardo* as an antidote.

The day this world has a healthier attitude towards death, there will be no need for *Bardo*. But we are a very unhealthy people; we live in a great illusion, and because of this illusion the antidote becomes essential. I believe there should be a wide application of *Bardo* in this country as well. Whenever anyone dies, all his loved ones should make an attempt to shatter his illusion that he is dying. If they could keep the person awake, if they could remind him at each and every point . . .

When the consciousness withdraws from the body, it does not leave all at once; all of the body does not die at the same time. The consciousness shrinks inside and, bit by bit, leaves each part of the body. Through various stages it withdraws, and all stages of this contraction can be recounted to the dying man as a means of keeping him conscious.

There can be many ways of keeping a dying person awake. For example, special kinds of aromas can help a person stay conscious, just as certain kinds of aromas, odors, can make a person unconscious. Incense and benzoin were discovered mainly because they help to keep one awake. A kind of music can be created around a person to make him stay conscious. And there can be music which can make a person fall asleep. You come across music which can put you to sleep—there can be music which can keep you awake as well! Certain words, certain *mantras* can be uttered which can help the person stay awake and not go to sleep. Certain parts of a dying man's body can be tapped in order to stop him from falling asleep and keep his consciousness alive. He can be made to sit in a certain posture to prevent him from falling asleep, to let him stay conscious.

A Zen Master was dying. He gathered other monks around him and said, "I want to ask you something. My time has come, but I feel there is no use dying the way everyone dies. Many have died like that before. It's no fun. My question is: have you ever seen anyone die walking?"

The monks replied, "We haven't seen anyone do it, but we have heard of a certain mystic who died walking."

The Master said, "All right, forget it! Let me ask you this: have you seen any mystic dying while standing on his head?"

The people around him said, "We never conceived or dreamed of such a thing, let alone saw someone dying like that."

"All right then," said the Master, "that's the way it will be." He stood on his head and died.

The crowd around the Master became very scared. The sight of an unknown corpse is frightening enough, but to bring down a corpse standing on its head was even more scary. The Master was a dangerous man. The way he had positioned himself . . . Dead, no one dared bring him down and lay him on a bier. Then someone suggested calling his elder sister, a nun living in a monastery nearby. She was known to have set him right whenever he was mischievous as a young boy.

The sister was approached and made aware of the whole situation. She became very annoyed. She said, "He has always been mischievous like that. He hasn't given up his habits even in his old age. So even while dying he couldn't refrain from playing a trick!" The ninety-year-old woman grabbed her staff and came. Striking her staff hard on the ground, she exclaimed, "Now stop this naughtiness! If you have to die, die properly."

The Master quickly came down and laughed, "I was just having fun," he said. "I was curious to see what these people were going to do. Now I shall lie down and die in the conventional way." So he promptly lay down and died.

His sister walked away. "Now, that's more like it," she said. "Dispose of him." She didn't look back. "There is a way of doing things," she said. "Whatsoever you do, do it properly."

So our illusion of death is a social illusion. The illusion can be removed. There is a technique to remove it; there is a systematic way to get rid of it. If no one else removes it, then anyone who has practiced even a little meditation can come out of it himself at the time of death. If you have even had a little experience of meditation; if you have even had a glimpse of the truth that you are separate from your body; if the feeling of disidentification with the body should, even for a moment, ever go deep within you, you won't be unconscious at the time of death. In fact, by then, your state of unconsciousness would already be broken. You would be able to die knowingly.

To be able to die knowingly is a contradiction in terms. No one can ever die knowingly, consciously, because he remains aware all the time that he is not dying, that something is dying in him but *he* is not. He keeps watching this separation and ultimately finds that his body is lying away from him, at a distance. Then death turns out to be merely a separation; it amounts to the breaking of a connection. It is as if I were to step out of this house, and the members of this household, unaware of the world outside these walls, were to come to the door and bid me a tearful goodbye, feeling that the man they had come to say goodbye to had died.

The separation of the body and the consciousness is death. Because there is this separation, it is meaningless to call it death—it is merely a loosening, a breaking of a connection. It is nothing more than changing clothes. So, one who dies with awareness never really dies, hence the question of death never arises for him. He won't even call death an illusion. He won't even say who dies and who does not die. He will simply state that what we called life up to yesterday

was merely an association. That association has broken. Now a new life has begun which, in the former sense, is not an association. Perhaps it is a new connection, a new journey.

Do you now follow what I mean when I say death proves to be an illusion for one who dies with awareness? Illusion means death never was. It was just a social belief created by those who did not know how to die, who were not dead, who had no knowledge of death. And this belief has prevailed since eternity, and will continue to exist in the future, because those who are not dead will forever pass judgment on those who are. The dead never return with news.

The truth is that a meditative person, one who may have made a little headway in meditation, does not realize for a long time that he is dead. He sees people around him and wonders why they are weeping. The arrangements for taking his body for cremation, or the arrangements to bury him, are significant only to remind him he is no longer alive, that he is no longer the same person.

This is the reason why, in this country, we burn all bodies except those of sannyasins. The sole reason for this was that, if the dead body were to be saved, the spirit might hover around it for several months under the false idea that the body was not dead, and try to find ways to re-enter it. Saving the body meant creating a little impediment for its new journey. The spirit would have to hang around unnecessarily; hence the custom of immediate cremation—so, at the cremation ground, the spirit could see that the affair is all over, that what it had taken to be its body no longer exists. The spirit realizes it no longer has any link with the body, that the bridge

is broken. The matter is over, the whole thing is finished.

So keep in mind that the system of burning the body is not just a way of vacating the house. There are other important reasons behind it. Actually the departing person finds it hard to believe he is dead. How can he? He sees himself the same as before, without the slightest difference. Only a sannyasin's body was never cremated because a sannyasin already knows he is not the body. That's why we could build a tomb over his body. This was possible because the sannyasin had already realized he and his body were separate. So there is no difficulty in preserving the body of a realized sannyasin. But the same is not true with regard to an ordinary man, for his spirit can keep wandering a long time. It can still try to figure out a way to re-enter the body.

It is possible to die in a state of awareness only if you have lived with awareness. If you have learned how to live consciously, you will certainly be able to die consciously—because dying is a phenomenon of life; it takes place *in* life. In other words, death is the final happening of what you understand life to be. It is not an event that occurs outside of life.

Ordinarily, we look upon death as something which happens outside of life, or as some kind of phenomenon opposite to life. No, in fact, it is the final occurrence in the series of events which take place in life. It is like a tree that bears fruit. First the fruit is green, then it starts turning yellow. It turns more and more yellow until, finally, it becomes completely yellow and falls from the tree. That falling from the tree is not an event outside of yellowing process of the fruit; rather, it is the eventual fulfillment of the yellowing itself.

The falling of the fruit from the tree is not an external event; rather it is the culmination of the yellowing, of the ripening it has already gone through. And what was going on when the fruit was green? It was getting ready to face the same final event. And the same process was going on when it had not even blossomed on the branch as yet, when it was still hidden inside the branch. Even in that state it was preparing for the final event as well. And what about when the tree had not been manifested yet, when it was still within the seed? The same preparation was going on then as well. And how about when this seed had not even been born and was still hidden in some other tree? The same process was going on.

So the event of death is but a part of the chain of events belonging to the same phenomenon. The final event is not the end, it is just a separation. One relationship, one order, is replaced by another relationship, another order.

How do you see death in relation to nirvana?

Nirvana means, firstly, that one has realized totally there is no death at all. Secondly, it means one has also come to know that, in what we call life, nothing is attained. *Nirvana* means awareness of the realities that what we understand as death is no death at all, and that what we mean by life is not really life. Do you follow what I am saying? One thing: *nirvana* means that when a person knows death he will find there is no death. There is another phenomenon connected with this, and that is that one who sees life with

full awareness will find that what everyone calls life is not life either—just as death is a social illusion, that is a social illusion too. *Nirvana* means the total realization of both realities.

If you only know there is no such thing as death, then you will continue to take new births. Life, in a sense, will go on. In that case you will have known only half the truth. The desire to live again, to have another body, to take a new birth will remain. The day you come to know the other half of the truth, the day you come to know the truth in its entirety—that life is not life, that death is not death—that day you will have reached the point of no return. Then there will be no question of returning. Do you follow me?

It is like saying farewell to a person who has died. We see the body as his final resting place. As long as he was in the body the man believed it to be his final abode as well. So, from the outside, he will knock on the door to find entry. If the steps of this house are broken, if there is no remaining link, then he will knock on the door of another house, of another body—because life can only be experienced by being in the body. So he will eventually enter into one or another house, another body. This is how, as soon as the person dies, his spirit becomes restless and begins wandering in search of another body immediately—because it has always identified life with having a physical body.

It may not have occurred to you, but your last thought as you fall asleep at night becomes the first thought when you wake up in the morning. Watch it a little. The last thought of the previous night will become your first thought next morning—seven hours later. The thought will wait for you to wake up. It will wait overnight

on the doorstep of your consciousness in order to begin work as soon as you get up in the morning. If you have had a fight with somebody the previous night, then the very first thought the next morning will be about that fight. If you slept with a prayer on your lips, then you will wake up in the morning with the same prayer in your thoughts. What occurred last night will be the starting point of the next morning.

The last thought, the last wish, the last desire of a dying man will become his first desire after death. He will immediately set out on the journey. If he felt at the moment of dying that his body was being destroyed—that he is dying, that he is losing his body—then his spirit will frantically run all over looking for a passage for an instant birth. So whatever is your last desire at the dying moment—the very last desire, remember—that will be the essence of your entire life. Actually, even the last thought before going to sleep is the abstract of your whole day's happenings, the sum total of the entire day, the digest of it. For example, a man runs a shop all day long, and at night he makes a summary of his day's accounts and then goes to sleep. Similarly, the last thought before falling asleep is the summary of your whole day's account.

If a person were to note his last thought before going to sleep at night—the very last thought—he would be able to write a wonderful autobiography, incomparable. That would be the short, abstract story of your life. It would contain everything that is essential, and all that is non-essential would drop away. If you were to note the very first thought each morning, looking at fifteen thoughts collected over fifteen days would enable you to know everything about your life—

what you were, what you are, what you want to be.

The last thought in your dying moments is the quintessence of your entire life of seventy, eighty years. The same will become your potential for the next life. That will be your asset to carry into the next birth. You may call it *karma*, you may call it desire or whatsoever else you will; you may call it *samskara*, conditioning, it won't make any difference. Rather, you should call it a built-in program of your life, applicable in the future.

It is amazing, but when you sow a particular little seed, why does it only give rise to the banyan tree? The seed must have had a built-in program, otherwise this would not be possible. It must have contained a blueprint. How else could it grow leaves and branches, and why would they all be of a banyan tree? The seed must have been programmed. In it, that little seed must have had the entire plan. If one could draw a horoscope of that seed, one could forecast how many leaves it would grow, how much fruit it would bear, how many seeds it would contain, how tall and wide it would be, how long its branches would be, how many bullock carts could find rest and shelter under it. All these things can be looked into in detail, because all of it is hidden in that tiny seed. It's like the blueprint of a building; it contains all that it will be someday.

At the time of death we gather the essence of our entire life. We save whatsoever we consider significant, and whatsoever we find useless, we drop. A man who has earned one hundred thousand rupees and donated a thousand rupees to the building of a temple, will not remember the temple in his dying moments—but the safe

containing ninety-nine thousand rupees, that he will undoubtedly remember.

In one's dying moments the significant will be saved, the non-significant will be thrown away. The essential and the non-essential will be sorted. At the time of departure all that is worthless will drop, and that which is meaningful will be packed up, carried over by you. That will become the basis of your journey; it will instantly become your built-in program. Now you will set out on a new journey, and your future birth will take place according to this future program. It will be a new voyage, a new body. It will be a whole new set-up. And this happens as scientifically as anything else.

So *nirvana* means that a person has come to know that death is not really death, nor is life, life. Once he has come to the realization of both, there is no longer any built-in program left. He lets go of the program. He lets go of both the essential and the unessential. Now he is ready to go all by himself, like the lonely flight of a bird. He goes all alone, leaving everything behind. He leaves behind the treasure as well as the temple. He clears himself of the debts he owes to others as well as the debts others owe to him. He foregoes good deeds as well as bad deeds. In fact, he foregoes everything.

Kabir says, "I leave behind my cloak intact." He says he wore it with such care that no accounts were left pending. He took it off so totally that he did not have to review, to re-evaluate his understanding of the real and the unreal, of the essential and the unessential.

Kabir says, "I wore my cloak with great care and then put it aside as I found it, without impairing it in any way." In such a situation there

cannot be any built-in program for the future, because the person leaves everything in its virgin state. He will not choose anything; he will not save anything, he will transcend all. Without harboring a single desire for anything, he will let go of whatsoever he has earned in life. That's why Kabir says, "O swan, take off on the flight alone." Now the swan, his soul, is leaving all alone, accompanied by no one—neither friend nor foe, neither good deeds nor bad deeds, neither scriptures nor doctrines—nothing.

So *nirvana* means one who has known that neither was life indeed life, nor was death really death. And when we know all that is not, we begin to see that which is.

THE CHOICE IS ALWAYS YOURS

Bombay
Evening of August 2, 1970

At the Dwarka meditation camp you mentioned that all sadhanas, all spiritual disciplines are false, because we have never been separate from God. Does that mean the state of unconsciousness is false? Is the growth of body and mind false? Is the cessation of conditioning false? Is the achievement of moving from the gross to the subtle false? Is all the preparation for the journey from the first body to the seventh body false? Is the long process of the discipline of kundalini all a sham? Kindly explain.

First of all, when I refer to something as false, as untruth, it does not mean it is non-existent. Even a falsehood has its own existence. One could not call it a falsehood if that were not true. A falsehood has its own existence and so does a dream. When we say a dream is false, it does not mean a dream has no existence. It only means

that the existence of a dream is psychological, not real. It is a whim of the mind, not a fact.

When we say the world is *maya*, illusion, it does not mean the world is non-existent. Because if the world does not exist then whom are you addressing? Who is talking? Why? When one calls this world an illusion, he at least assumes that the speaker exists and so does the listener. He also assumes that somebody needs to explain, and someone needs to understand. At least this much truth is established. So when we call this world an illusion, it does not mean the world does not exist. It means the world *appears* to have an existence. Calling this world *maya* simply means the world is not what it looks like; rather, it is merely an appearance. It does not look the way it actually is, it appears like what it really is not.

For example, a man is walking down the street when it is almost dark. He sees a piece of rope lying there and, mistaking it for a snake, runs for his life. Someone tells him it wasn't a snake, that what he saw was all false, that he ran for no reason. Now what does this mean? To say the snake was false does not mean the man did not see the snake. He would not have escaped had he not seen it—he *did* see the snake. As far as the question of his seeing the snake is concerned, the snake *was* there.

Since he saw . . . And, had the rope not been there, he could not have seen the snake in an empty space. So the rope undoubtedly gave credence to his illusion. What he saw inwardly was different from what existed outside. A rope was lying there and he thought it was a snake. He did not see the rope as a rope—which it was; the rope appeared to him like a snake—which it

was not. So he did not see that which was, he saw that which was not. Actually, that which did not exist was superimposed on that which did.

So when you apply words such as falsehood, untruth, illusion, appearance, do keep one thing in mind: it does not mean something is non-existent. Take, for instance, this man who fled, believing he had seen a snake. If you try and convince him there is no snake on the street he will refuse to believe you; he will insist he has seen the snake. You may persuade him to go back and look once again, but he won't agree unless you lend him a stick for his safety. You know very well there is no snake and carrying a stick is meaningless, but the man is sure of the snake and finds the stick useful. So when you offer him a stick for his safety someone may ask, "If the snake is not really there, then why do you give him the stick? That shows you believe the snake is there as well." Nevertheless, you reiterate, "There is no snake, the snake is false. However, the man has seen it and is scared to go there again. For him the snake is real." So you give him the stick and tell him, "If there is a snake, kill it." If there is none, then there is no question.

What man sees in life is not the truth of life. Only when one is fully aware can one see the truth of life. Truth is adulterated with falsehood in the same proportion to which one is unconscious. Things appear distorted, perverted, to the same degree one is asleep. For one thing, what appears to us is not the reality. So when one points out to a person who is asleep that everything is false, that it is illusion, he refuses to believe you. He says, "How can I believe everything is illusion? My son is sick. How can that be an illusion? I am hungry. How can I take it as an

illusion? I need a house. How can I believe all these things are illusion? I have a body. When someone hits me with a stone I hurt, my body bleeds and I feel pain."

Then what shall be done about it? Some device will have to be found to awaken this man. And all these devices will be similar in nature to the stick. The day he will wake up he will do the same thing with these devices that the other man did with the stick you gave him. He went to where he had spotted the snake, found a rope lying there, laughed at himself and threw away the stick. He said, "The snake was indeed false. Now it is useless even to carry the stick." He may come back and be amazed at you for having had him carry the stick all that way unnecessarily—the snake was not there.

What I call meditation, or *kundalini*, or the technique of spiritual discipline are essentially means of searching for that which does not exist. The day you find, for certain, that what you saw did not even exist, is the day all techniques become meaningless, all means become useless. That day you will realize the illness was false and so was the cure for it. Actually, there cannot be a cure for a pseudo illness—or can there be? If the illness is false the cure can never be right. A pseudo illness requires a pseudo treatment; that is the only way it can be cured. Two falsehoods negate each other. That's why when I say all techniques of spiritual discipline are false I mean it in the sense that what we are seeking was never lost in the first place.

The rope, in our example, was always a rope; not for a second did it ever turn into a snake. The rope was lying there all along. What did happen, however, was that the man lost sight of the rope.

Not even for a moment did the rope change into a snake, but for the man it became a snake—a snake which did not exist even for a second.

Now this obviously creates a stalemate, a rather complicated situation. It is indeed a rope but it looks like a snake. The snake has to be killed and the rope has to be found—without killing the snake the rope cannot be found. Without finding the rope the snake will not be killed. So something has to be done.

And yet, in a case like this what do you think will result from doing anything about it? At the most we will come to see that which never was, was not there; and that which is, will be visible right before us. And the day this realization dawns on us, will we say we attained something? Will we be able to say we lost the snake and found the rope? Not in the least—because there was no possibility of losing the snake; the rope was there all the time. There was no question of finding it, it was there all along. The rope was always present, right there.

When Buddha attained enlightenment people came to him and asked, "What did you attain?"

Buddha said, "The question is meaningless, I attained nothing."

"Does that mean your labor, all these years, was all in vain?" they asked. "Your years of penance, years of seeking, did they not yield any results?"

"If you ask me in terms of attainment—my efforts have certainly been in vain, because I gained nothing. And yet I say to you: follow the same path I did, do what I did."

They said, "Are you out of your mind? Why should we do something which was so fruitless?"

Buddha replied, "I didn't achieve anything, of course, but I lost for certain, I lost something that was not really there. I lost something which was not there at all, something I had believed to be there. What I found was something I always had, which was already found, something which did not have to be found. Being surrounded by lies, what I had assumed to be non-existent—that's what I found."

Now what does this mean? How to convey that that which was already present was found again, that that which was already attained was found, that that which was never attained was lost?

So when I say all methods of spiritual discipline are false, it does not mean that you don't have to do them. I am merely saying that you are so deeply steeped in falsehoods that there is no other alternative but to use equally false methods in order to neutralize them. You have moved so much on the side of falsehood that even while coming back this much ground—the distance you have traveled going into lies—will have to be covered.

For example, I walk ten steps into this room. If I wish to get out of this room I will have to walk *back* at least ten steps—in this very room. Now if someone were to persuade me to walk ten steps more in order to get out of it, I would find it very confusing, for in the first place, I got inside the room because I walked ten steps. Now if I were to take ten steps more, I would have walked twenty steps inside the room. Actually, what someone needs to show me is the way to get *out* of the room without proceeding further *inside* the room. Regardless, I will surely have to walk ten steps; although now my attitude will be different,

my course will not be the same, I will not be facing the same direction—my back will be towards what I was facing before, and vice versa.

We are living in lies. In following a spiritual discipline, only the direction you face will change. We will have to live in lies, that is unavoidable. Your back will be towards what you were facing before, and your face will be where your back was. The fact remains, we will have to retrace the same route to the same extent we have walked ourselves forward into lies. The day we return on the same path, the whole thing will look very amusing.

It is like giving an antidote to someone who has taken a wrong medicine. The antidote was not needed; it was only used because the man took the wrong medicine. Since the poison, the wrong medicine, has already entered his body, it is necessary to give the man another poison to counteract the former one. Remember, however, the antidote is a poison too. Only a poison can act against another poison. The second potion is a poison too, except that it is meant to work in the opposite direction. You would be horrified if a physician were to tell you your body is poisoned and that he is giving you more poison. You might cry out, "As it is, I am dying of poison. Now you are adding more to it!" The doctor explains, "This is an antidote. It is indeed a poison, but antithetical to the former one."

So when I say this world is a lie, then a *sadhana*, a spiritual discipline cannot be true. How can a true *sadhana* be applied to counter a false world? You cannot use a real sword in order to kill an imaginary ghost—you will hurt yourself if you do. Make sure you have a false sword to kill an imaginary ghost. You will obviously create a

problem for yourself if you go to kill a non-existent ghost with a real gun. The real gun can cause you harm. So if you need to drive out a ghost it would be good to wear a talisman, it is neither a sword nor a gun. It is a false cure, it is an antidote too. It is perfect, an exact antithetical lie meant to counter another lie.

All spiritual disciplines are nothing but ways of getting out of the *samsara*, the mundane world. And since I call this mundane world an illusion—illusion in the sense that it is not what we understand it to be . . .

So the question is: What can we do to remove this illusion? We need to retrace our steps to the same extent we have gone deeply into the illusion. Why do I feel like reminding you of this? Because a seeker constantly faces a danger. And the danger is: he may use a talisman in order to keep the ghost away; however, in doing so, although he succeeds in saving himself from the ghost, he holds on to the charm tightly. He finds the talisman the savior of his life. Now he is as afraid of losing the charm as he was of the ghost. Naturally. How can he afford to lose something that saved his life? So he is freed from the ghost but gets hooked to the talisman. That's why he needs to be reminded that just as the ghost was unreal so is the talisman. Now that the ghost is gone, he had better throw the charm away as well.

Again and again, I would like to remind every seeker that, whatever *sadhana* he may be following, basically it is an antidote for his getting himself into a falsehood. And an antidote for a lie will inevitably have to be a lie. Only a poison can counter another poison—for it works in the opposite direction. It is essential to bring this

point home to a seeker, otherwise he may succeed in dropping the *samsara*, but grab on to sannyas, to renunciation. He may drop the marketplace but seize upon the temple. He may give up money but latch onto meditation. It is dangerous to cling to anything, because whatsoever one hangs on to becomes a bondage—regardless of whether it is money or meditation. The day meditation is not needed, the day it becomes meaningless, that is when the *sadhana* becomes real.

Obviously, one who has reached the roof should find the ladder useless. If he still insists the ladder is useful to him and clings to it, then understand he has not yet reached the roof, he must still be standing somewhere on the ladder. It is conceivable one may reach the top rung of the ladder and yet hold tight to it. Should this be the case, then remember the man is still as far away from the roof as he was when he was standing on the first rung of the ladder. He has not reached the roof yet. In both cases he is far away from the roof.

You may climb almost the entire ladder, but if you stop at the last rung, it doesn't mean you have reached the roof—you are still on the ladder. And that makes the difference. Initially you were on the first rung, now you are on the hundredth rung, but you are on the ladder nevertheless. And one who is on the ladder is definitely not on the roof. If you want to be on the roof, you will have to do two things: you will have to climb the ladder, and after reaching the roof, get rid of it.

That's why I say, on the one hand, that meditation is useful. And at the same time I also say that meditation is nothing more than an antidote. Hence, I maintain, follow a spiritual disci-

pline, and then drop it too. So when I say both things simultaneously it obviously creates a difficulty. It is natural you feel that on the one hand I say, do this, do that, and then I declare all *sadhanas* are false.

"If this is so then why should we follow them?" you naturally ask. Your logic says, "If one has to get off the ladder eventually, then why climb it in the first place?"

Remember, however, that one who doesn't climb the ladder stays off it, and one who has climbed it and stepped out on the roof is also off the ladder—but both exist on totally different planes. One will be on the roof while the other will be on the ground below. Although neither is on the ladder, there is a fundamental difference between the two. One is off the ladder because he didn't climb it, while the other is off because he did climb the ladder and then got off.

Life is a great mystery wherein one needs to climb up certain things and climb down other things; wherein one needs to cling to certain things and drop certain other things. But the human mind says, "If you want to hold on to something then hold to it completely; if you want to drop it then drop it absolutely."

This kind of reasoning is dangerous. It cannot help bring about any dynamism in life. I am aware of both things, and I can see the problem. Some people are holding on to their riches while others are holding on to their religion. Some are clinging to the *samsara*, while some are holding tight to the idea of *moksha*—but basically the holding remains.

Only he is liberated who hangs on to nothing. One who is free from all clinging, attachments, blocks, demands, he alone knows the truth. Only he can know the truth who makes no

conditions. Even this much of a condition—that you would rather be in the temple worshipping than attending to your store—can prevent you from knowing the truth. In such a case you will end up knowing only the truth that is born out of a lie—such as the temple itself. Even this much of a condition on your part—that you would live only in a particular way, that you wish to live like a sannyasin—if this too became a condition, you would never come to know the truth. This would amount to holding on to the ladder after having climbed to the top rung.

Often it may have even occurred to you that “How can the very ladder which helped me climb so high be thrown away all of a sudden?” So you want to hold fast to the ladder. We find this happening all around us. For example, a man begins to earn money so that he can live a comfortable life later on. It takes him years to make money, and in the process he misses his rest and recreation. How could he have succeeded in creating his wealth otherwise? He had assumed at that moment he would earn a great deal and live in comfort and ease later. His aim was to live in comfort which, without having money, was naturally impossible. So the man was busy making money. And when you have to make money you can't afford to relax. The only way to make money is to give up rest and relaxation for years at a time.

So let's assume this man gives up his holidays and vacations for the next twenty to twenty-five years and earns a lot of money. No doubt he creates wealth, but he loses the habit of relaxing. Not relaxing at all becomes a habit to him, and that creates the problem. A practice of twenty-five years is behind him. Now if you ask

him to stay home and relax, he can't do it. He arrives at his office an hour earlier than his secretary; his staff quits at five o'clock, he leaves at seven. Apparently the man has forgotten that the ladder he climbed was for getting off one day. The objective was to get off at some level, and relax. The idea was to earn enough so that someday he could quietly slip off. His sole aim was to make money so he could retire.

Now he finds himself in a very difficult situation. In the pursuit of earning money he has lost his ability to relax, he got hooked to the habit of not relaxing. He thinks, how can he relax? So he goes on piling up money. He keeps on climbing the ladder, refuses to get off the ladder. His roof never comes closer. He goes on climbing—raising one ladder on top of another. No matter how much you persuade him, "It's enough, now it's time to get off," he persists by saying, "How can that be possible? I will have to build the ladder before I sit down and relax." So he goes on building his ladder and keeps climbing. It would not have mattered much had this been true only in regard to money. The same thing happens with regard to religion as well. Our mind functions exactly the same way—regardless.

A man enters the world of religion, and begins to renounce things. He gives things up so he can arrive at a point where his mind will be free of all attachments. His assumption is that as long as there is attachment, there will be bondage. So he says, "Leave everything, renounce everything that creates bondage!" He starts disowning his home, his business, his family, his wealth, his clothes—he goes on dropping things.

In twenty to twenty-five years his habit becomes so solid that now he can't give up the

habit of renouncing. The habit hangs around his neck like a rock. He continues to find ways and means—what to drop next?—and his ladder goes on rising. He begins to try to figure out whether to drop food, water, salt, butter, sugar, whatever. He goes on playing with ideas as to what he should renounce next—whether he should give up sleep, or stop bathing. He is continuously looking for ways to renounce things. Ultimately he even arrives at a point where he talks of giving up his life, begins to think in terms of committing suicide. He gets ready to do *santhara*, the religious practice of embracing death voluntarily.

One who renounces and one who clings are of the same kind. One is holding on to the ladder meant for renouncing things, while the other has seized upon the ladder meant for latching on to things. But none of them is willing to get off the ladder. And in my view, truth lies where ladders cease to exist and you land on plain ground, where there is no longer the need to climb up or down. Truth lies where you drop your attachment, where you drop your conditions, where you stop seeing things through your conditioned mind, where you begin to perceive things with a mind free of all conditioning—that's where the truth lies.

Perhaps that's precisely what Jesus means When Jesus was asked who would inherit the truth, he replied, "Those who are like children." Now what can this mean, "like children"? What it means is: the one who looks at things without any preconditioning. You will be amazed if you watch how children look at things. There is a difference between how we see things and how children do. When we see, we are

looking at something, we are looking for something, while a child just looks. He doesn't look for something in particular; his eyes simply move. Whatsoever is, whatsoever is visible, he just looks at it. He is not attached to seeing a particular thing. He is not fixed on the idea that what he sees should only appear in a particular way. He sees whatsoever there is. To put it rightly, his seeing is purposeless.

A child does not look with a purpose. That's why in the eyes of an adult you don't see the innocence you see in the eyes of a child. An adult sees things with a reason. If you have money in your pocket, he looks at you in a particular way; if your pocket is empty, he looks at you differently. If you happen to be beautiful, the man has a look of one kind; if you are not beautiful, he has a different look in his eyes. He looks at you in a special way if he is interested in you; otherwise he looks differently, or doesn't look at you at all. His seeing is purposive. For an adult even the simple act of looking is not without purpose.

When a purpose enters your view, a rope begins to look like a snake; the rope ceases to exist. Actually, just reflect, if you will, as to why a rope appears to someone like a snake. It is simply his projection—the man is scared. There is fear in his look. That means, whenever he looks at things, he looks out of fear. He is walking down the street in the dark, and there is fear in his eyes. He spots something lying on the road, it looks like something is moving. He immediately believes it to be a snake, because he is looking out of fear. He is guided by a purpose, he is looking through his unconscious mind to see if there is any snake on the street—and that makes him see a snake instead of a rope.

A child won't see a snake superimposed on a rope. Often, what is possible is that if a snake stays still, a child may take it to be a rope; he may not see it as a snake and may actually pick it up. If there is any purpose, any expectation, any fear in what we see . . . Understand well, if you are seeing through the mind, you will distort the object of your perception. So the question is, can we see without the use of mind? Seeing without the mind is the ultimate state. All our motives, our fears, our desires, our passions are stored in the mind.

Chekhov has written a short story. Two policemen were patrolling a street. They saw a crowd gathered near a tea stall. One man was holding a dog by his leg. He was saying he would kill the dog because it had bitten him. Everyone in the crowd was having fun and encouraging the man to kill the dog who was a menace and had bitten many people before. The policemen also stood in the crowd. Dogs harass policemen too, they pay special attention to them!

So the policemen were pleased to see someone taking care of the dog. "You are doing the right thing. Kill this dog; he is a great trouble to us at night," one policeman said. Right then the other policeman took his partner aside and said, "Watch it, I think it looks like that's our boss's dog." At once the first policeman, who had been urging that the dog be killed, went up to the man holding the dog, grabbed his collar and said, "You rogue! What do you mean by drawing a crowd in the middle of the street and holding up traffic? What do you mean by creating this nuisance? Come with us to the police station!" He immediately picked up the dog in his arms and began petting him. As the policeman started

showing affection to the dog, and as the man holding the dog was apprehended, the entire crowd grew very puzzled.

The crowd could not figure out what was going on—the policeman was ready to kill the dog just a while ago. The next moment, the second policeman looked at the dog a little more closely and said, “Nope, this doesn’t look like our boss’s dog!” Right away the first policeman got rid of the dog and yelled at the man, “Take hold of this dog and kill him. He is extremely dangerous.” However, by the time the man got hold of the dog the second policeman once again expressed his doubt by saying, “I can’t be sure, but he does look like our boss’s dog.”

The story continues like this. The attitude towards the dog changes many times because many times a change in purpose occurs. The dog is the same, the man is the same, the policemen are the same—everything is the same. The characters remain unchanged, but the story takes turns a few times because each time there is a change in motive. Sometimes he is perceived as the boss’s dog, and sometimes not. The policemen changed their attitude at once when the dog was seen not to belong to their boss. And they began petting it with a totally different attitude once it was perceived that the dog was owned by the boss.

This is the way we all live. As long as the mind exists, we shall continue to live like this. So what I am saying is that *sadhana* . . .

What is *sadhana*, spiritual discipline really? *Sadhana* means becoming free from this mind. But once you have become free, of what use will the *sadhana* be? You will need to bury it along with your mind. You will have to let go of the

spiritual discipline as well, along with the mind. You will have to tell your mind, "Take this *sadhana* with you. I was following it because of you. Now that you are leaving, kindly take this *sadhana* with you too!"

When a person is free from both the mind and the *sadhana*, free from the disease as well as the cure . . . Remember, if one is free from the illness alone but still continues the cure then one is not really free. Very often the illness does not prove to be as dangerous as getting hooked on the cure. It feels rather easy getting rid of illness because the illness is painful. One feels good about going through the cure, hence one never wants to drop it. But does that make the cure something worth hanging on to?

A cure is desirable indeed for a man who is ill, but what meaning can it have for a person who is healthy? For a healthy person, a cure is totally worthless. Since you are so determined to embrace illness, you are forced to accept the cure too. But if you stop insisting on falling sick, the cure will become totally meaningless.

The illness and the cure belong to the same plane, there is no difference between the two. There cannot be, otherwise they would cease to function. The cure exists on the same plane as the illness: the germs present in the drugs are opposite to the germs that cause illness. It is true that the disease and the cure stand with their backs to each other; however, the plane on which they exist is the same.

I am not only talking against the disease, I am talking against the cure as well. Because my experience is that, for the last thousands of years, a great deal has been said against the disease. Consequently, although people got rid of the disease, they latched on to the cure.

Those who got attached to the cure turned out to be even more dangerous than the ones who were ill. Hence, both things need to be considered. The illness and the cure both need to be dropped. Mind and meditation both have to be given up. *Samsara* and religion are both to be renounced. One needs to arrive at a point where nothing is left—either to hold on to or to drop. Then, only that which is, remains.

So when I talk about all these techniques—whether it is about *kundalini*, *chakras*, the seven bodies—they are all part of a dream. The fact is, you are already dreaming, and you won't be able to come out of it until you have rightly understood what the dream is all about.

It is necessary we have a right understanding of the dream in order to come out of it. A dream, a lie, has its own existence too. It has its own place in this world, and there are means to get rid of it. But ultimately, both are worth giving up. Hence I say to you, both are false—the *samsara* as well as the *sadhana*. If I were to say one of them is true, how will you drop it? Then you will hold fast to it. "How can truth be dropped? Truth has to be embraced," you might say.

So you may not hold on to anything, so you may not have any clinging, so you may not become subject to any complexes, so you may not become attached, I say to you: neither the *samsara* is true nor is the *sadhana*. The falsity of *sadhana* is for the purpose of negating the untruth of *samsara*. When both falsehoods attain parity and neutralize each other, then what remains is the truth. That truth is neither of this world, the *samsara*, nor of the *sadhana*. That truth is outside of both, or before both, or beyond both, or transcending both. It exists when both are not.

That's why I am talking about a third type of man who is neither worldly nor a renunciate. When somebody asks me, "Are you a sannyasin?" I find myself in great difficulty. Because if I say I am a sannyasin, I see myself caught in the same duality which exists between a worldly man and a monk. Similarly, when someone asks, "Are you a worldly man?" then too I face the same difficulty. Because if I say I am a worldly man, I once again find myself facing the duality that exists between a worldly man and a renunciate.

So either I should say I am both simultaneously—which is meaningless. Because if, at the same time, I am worldly and a renunciate both then the whole meaning is lost. The meaning existed because of the duality; the meaning was in the dichotomy. Leaving the world meant becoming a sannyasin; not accepting the life of a renunciate meant being a worldly man. So if I say I am both, the words lose their meaning. The same difficulty arises if I say I am not both, because we have no idea there is something beyond the two, that there can be a third. People say, "Either you belong here, or there. Either affirm that you are alive, or admit that you are dead. How can you say both are not true? That won't be acceptable."

The only way we live is by dividing things into two—either this or that. We either see darkness or light—there is no room in our lives for dusk, which is neither. Grey has no place in our lives. We divide things either into black or white, while the reality consists mostly of grey. When grey becomes a little dense it turns into darkness; when it becomes sparse it turns into white—but there is no room for grey. Either you

have a friend, or an enemy—there is no third place in between. As a matter of fact, the third place is the really true place—but it has no room in our language, our way of thinking, our way of life.

Suppose you were to ask me, "Are you my friend, or an enemy?" If I answer, "I am both," you will have difficulty in following me. How could I be both? If I say I am neither, even then it turns out to be meaningless, because my answer carries no sense. And the truth of the matter is that a healthy man will either be both or neither.

These are just two ways of expressing the same thing. In such a case the man will neither be a foe nor a friend. And in my view, it is only then that he will be a human being in the true sense of the word. He will neither have enmity with anyone, nor friendship; he will neither follow any act of renunciation, nor will he have any attachment to *samsara*.

I am looking for this third type of man. What I am talking to you about is only for the purpose of breaking your dream. And if the dream is already broken, then what I am saying has no meaning.

Let me tell you a story. Once a Zen Master got up from his sleep. He was a great believer in analyzing dreams. Dreams are, of course, very useful; they give much information about man. And since man is a liar, only a lie such as the dream can tell us about his lies. When you see a man in the marketplace, in the middle of the day, he is not as authentic as he is in his dream—in a dream which is totally a lie. If you come across a man telling his wife, with folded hands, that she is the most beautiful woman in the world—just look into his dreams. His wife hardly ever comes

into his dreams—other women you will find most certainly. His dream will tell you more exactly about him. A dream, which is essentially a lie.

Since man himself is a lie, a lie will have to be used to find out the truth about him. Had the man been authentic, his life itself would have revealed who he is. Then there would be no need to go into his dreams; his face would show it. An authentic man would tell his wife, "You don't look too beautiful to me, the woman next door looks very beautiful." That such a man does not exist among us is beside the point, but if there were to be such a person, dreams would stop coming to him. A husband who can tell his wife "I feel no love for you today, I am attracted to the woman walking down the street"—a man who can be so simple and direct—will stop dreaming. The other woman no longer need come in his dream, he has taken care of the business during the day. The matter is over, the dream is no more.

A dream is a lingering phenomenon. Whatsoever did not happen during the day, what you couldn't say, couldn't do, remains dormant within and then attempts to revive itself at night. Since the man lived all day long in lies, the very lies will keep appearing as realities at night in his dreams. That's why the entire field of today's psychology—whether it be of Freud, Jung or Adler—is the psychology of analyzing dreams.

It is strange we have to resort to analyzing dreams in order to understand man. Dream analysis has become the means to know a man. Just think. What does this mean? If you visit a psychoanalyst, he doesn't show much concern about you, he becomes interested in your

dreams—because, as you are, you are a lie. It is useless to ask anything about you, hence the need to consult your dreams. Your reflection comes through clearly, your picture emerges sharply in the dreams—which are false. So the psychoanalyst wants to peek into your dreams. The whole discipline of psychology is based on the analysis of dreams.

The Zen Master was very keenly interested in dreams too. He used to ask his disciples, the seekers, about their dreams, because it was possible a seeker might come and say he wished to find God, but instead might dream of finding a diamond mine. In reality he might have nothing to do with God. It is also possible he might be seeking God so that some day he might ask him the whereabouts of the diamond mine. This is how his dream tells what his real search is all about.

The Master would ask his disciples to keep a diary of their dreams. If people were to write honestly in their biographies only about what happened when they were asleep and leave out the time they were awake, the world would become a much better place to live in, and we would come to know much truer facts about men.

The daytime world is full of lies. The phony man plans it very well. At least in the dream a kind of truth exists, because the dream is unplanned: it happens on its own; it has its own reality. If we were to uncover the dreams of all the holy men, we would find a great many of these holy men of no worth. Most of them would appear to be criminals—of course, criminals of the kind which do not commit crimes in the marketplace, but in their minds.

One morning the Master had just gotten up when a disciple of his happened to pass by. The Master called him and said, "Last night I had a dream. Interpret it for me, will you?"

The disciple said, "Please wait, let me go and bring the interpretation!"

The Master asked, "You'll go and bring the interpretation?" But he waited.

The disciple went inside, brought a jug of water, and said, "Here, just wash your face. Now that the dream is broken, what's the sense in interpreting it? Please wash your face so that whatsoever little illusion, whatsoever little trace of your dream that may still be left can be cleaned away."

The Master said, "Sit beside me. I like your interpretation."

Then another disciple passed by and the Master called him and said, "Last night I had a dream. This fellow has given a little interpretation. Here is a jug filled with water. Would you give any further interpretation?"

The disciple said, "If you will wait for just one minute I will be back soon." He went running and brought a cup of tea. Addressing the Master he said, "Please have this cup of tea and the whole matter will be over. Now that you are up from your sleep and have washed your face, why do you want to get me into the trap?"

The Master asked him to sit beside him and said, "I liked what you said. But had you tried to give an interpretation to my dream, I would have thrown you out of the *ashram*. You saved yourself, you saved yourself by a hair's breadth. When the dream is broken anyway, then what's the point in interpreting it? The interpretation is valid only as long as the dream is happening."

So all my explanations are explanations of dreams, and the explanations of a dream can never be true. Do you follow what I am saying?

How can an explanation of a dream have any real meaning whatsoever when the dream itself is never true? An explanation of a dream, however, can be helpful in putting an end to the dream—and should that ever happen, you will wake up. And the day you wake up, you won't say the dream was true; you won't say the explanation was right, you will say it was just a play which ended. And you will say there were two sides to the game: one of indulging in the dream, the other of destroying it. Indulgence in the dream is *samsara*; explanations that break the dream make up *sannyas*—although, basically, both are happenings of the dream state.

Samsara signifies indulgence in the dream, while *sannyas* is an effort to destroy the dream—but both happenings are of the dream. When the dream is over, there will be neither *samsara* nor *sannyas*. Then whatsoever will be, will be the truth.

Is sadhana a natural growth, or is it a jump outside the evolutionary process of nature? If sadhana is not a jump and transcendence of the natural evolution, then is it possible that the entire human race can reach spiritual heights all by itself? If it is true that the course of evolution continues to move ahead, why were the greatest spiritual cultures of the past left behind in the whole evolutionary process?

There are many things that need to be taken into account.

The first thing. As soon as we see man separate from the universe, questions such as these begin to come up. For example, if we heat water to a hundred degrees, on the hundredth degree the water takes a jump and turns into vapor. The heating of water, as well as the water turning into vapor by taking a jump are natural phenomena. This is not an unnatural event.

Had there not been a natural law for the water to take a leap and turn into vapor, by itself the water hadn't the means to become vapor. If nature had not been equipped to make the water heat up to a hundred degrees, the water itself did not have the capacity to heat up to a hundred degrees. However, if water has consciousness it can either save itself from heating or it can give itself up to the fire—and in either case it would be a natural phenomenon. What I mean to say is, nothing unnatural can ever happen in this universe. In fact, that which can never happen is the unnatural.

Only what is natural takes place in this universe. There is no way for anything unnatural to happen; whatsoever happens is natural. If man is evolving spiritually, it is because of his natural potential. If he is jumping out, then that too is his natural potential. His choice whether to jump or not to jump is a natural possibility too. This means there are multi-potentialities in nature. Actually, our mistake is that we use the word "nature" in the sense of a single potentiality.

Nature is a cumulation of infinite possibilities. Within these possibilities the heating of water to a hundred degrees is a natural happening, and the freezing of water at zero is also a natural happening. A natural phenomenon such

as the freezing of water at zero does not negate the natural phenomenon of water turning into vapor at a hundred degrees. It is not that one event is natural while the other is not—both are natural.

Darkness is natural and so is light. Falling down is natural and so is rising up. There are infinite possibilities in nature. We are always standing on the crossroads from where an infinite number of paths emerge. And the interesting thing is that whatsoever we choose, the capability to choose will itself be a gift from nature. Even if we were to choose a wrong path, nature will bring us to the very end of it.

Nature is very cooperative. If we choose the road to hell, it begins to clear the way and invites us to proceed. It will not stop you. Why would nature stop you from turning water into ice, if you wish to do so, and have you rather turn it into vapor? Nature will be happy to clear your way if you wish to go to hell, or heaven; whether you wish to live or die, nature will always be willing to cooperate. To live is natural, to die is natural, and your ability to choose either of the two is natural too. If you can grasp this multidimensionality of nature, you will have no difficulty in understanding what I am saying.

Suffering is natural, and so is happiness. To live like a blind man is natural, and to live with open eyes is natural too. To be awake is natural, and to stay asleep is natural as well. Nature contains endless possibilities. And the interesting thing is we are not living outside of nature, we are part of nature. Our choosing is also due to the natural capability we have within us.

As the individual becomes more and more conscious, his ability to choose becomes more and more profound. The more unconscious an

individual is, the less profound is his ability to choose. For example, there is no way that water lying in the sun cannot turn into vapor—it would be difficult for it not to. The water can't decide whether to become vapor or not. If it stays in the sun, then it is sure to become vapor, and lying in the cold, it is sure to become ice. This, the water will have to live through; although it will have no knowledge that it is living through it, because its consciousness is low, or not at all, or dormant.

Trees in Africa rise hundreds of feet in search of the sun. They grow in height. Trees in India won't grow to such heights, because in India there aren't forests that thick. In a dense forest the tree has to grow higher and higher in order to survive. It needs to overcome other trees in height so it can receive the sunlight. The tree would die if it didn't find the needed height. It is a matter of life and death for the tree. The tree has to exercise its choice a little.

In a dense forest the trees will widen less; instead, they will grow taller, become conical. In a thick forest it is dangerous for a tree to grow wide; that will cause it to die. The branches of the nearby trees will get entangled with each other and the trees won't be able to reach the sun. So if the tree has to reach the sun it can't grow its branches wide, it has to grow tall. This too is a tree's choice. If you were to plant the same tree in a country where there are no dense forests, its height would be shorter.

There are trees which actually move a few feet every year. This means there are trees which move their roots as we move our feet. They strengthen the roots that lie in the direction where they wish to move, and relax the roots of the area they wish to abandon. This is how they

move forward a little. A swampy area makes this movement easier.

There are trees that are carnivorous. They lure birds, trap them, and once the birds have landed on them, they close their leaves. These trees have developed quite a system for luring birds. They have leaves the size of a plate. The plate-like leaves contain a very fragrant juice, and the fragrance naturally attracts birds from far away. As soon as the bird arrives and sits on the leaf, the leaves from all around close in on the bird, press it, and the tree sucks its blood.

Now it is difficult to accept that the tree is not exercising a choice. It certainly is, and it is making some plans as well: it is on the lookout for something. Animals make even greater choices—they run, they move swiftly—nevertheless, as compared to the choices made by man, their choices are very ordinary.

Man faces much greater choices because his consciousness is much more evolved. He chooses not only through his body, he chooses through his mind as well. He not only chooses to travel on earth, he also chooses to travel vertically, in space. That too is within his power to choose.

Although this area has not been researched yet, I feel, however, that in the near future science may discover there are trees which have suicidal tendencies—trees who may not be choosing to live, who may be wanting to stay short in the dense forest and eventually die. This is yet to be discovered.

Among human beings we can see clearly that there are people who are suicidal—they don't choose to live; they keep looking for ways of dying. Wherever they see a thorn, they rush towards it like a madman; flowers don't appeal to

them. Wherever they see defeat they are drawn towards it as if hypnotized, but when they see victory they look for scores of excuses. People find thousands of arguments against the possibility of growth, but where they are certain of decay people keep moving head on in that direction.

All choices are open to man. The more conscious man becomes, the more his choices will lead him towards happiness; the more unconscious he is, the closer he will move towards misery. So when I say to you, you will have to make a choice . . . There are ways to become vapor, but you will have to reach to the point where vapor comes into being. There are ways to become ice, but you will have to come to the point where ice comes into being. There are ways to live, but *you* will have to explore the order of life. There are ways to meet death, but you will have to find the order of death. The choice is yours. Furthermore, you and nature are not two separate entities—you *are* nature.

So what this means is, nature's multidimensionality is of two kinds. Mahavira has used a term which is worth considering. The term Mahavira has used is *anant-anant*—infinite infinities. There is already a word *anant*, infinite. It means infinite in one direction. The word *anant-anant* means infinite in infinite directions. It is not that the infinity is only in a couple of directions—it is in all directions; there are infinities in all infinities. So this universe is not just infinite. Rather, one should say the universe consists of infinite infinities.

What I am saying is, first, there are infinite directions, and nature provides the opportunity for all of them. There are infinite choices and

nature makes all of them available too. There are an infinite number of people who are indeterminate parts of nature itself. And each one has a free choice whether to choose or not to choose. All of this, however, is not being controlled from above—it is regulated from within.

This infinity, or one should say this "infinite infinities", is not like someone pulling an ox forward with a rope tied around its neck. Nor is it like someone lashing and shoving the ox from behind. Rather, it's like spring water which has burst forth through its own inner power and is flowing. Neither is anyone pulling it forward, nor is anyone pushing it from behind; neither is anyone giving it a call, nor is anyone forcing it to move ahead. It has a tremendous power, tremendous energy. And what is the energy doing? It is bursting forth, it is flowing. That's its inner expansion.

So there are infinite dimensions, infinite choices, infinite parts making choices. But there is no controller-type God supervising from above. There is no God sitting above and giving directions; there is no engineer. Rather, the infinite energy within is the only source that causes everything to expand.

So there are three planes. One plane consists of the state of unconsciousness, where, because of unconsciousness, whatsoever happens, just happens. The choice is almost none. The second plane, where choice exists, is the human plane, the plane of consciousness. Here, whatsoever happens, happens because of our choice. Here, we can't hold anyone else responsible for it. If one is a thief, it is his choice; if one is honest, that too is his choice. On this plane whatsoever one is, it is ultimately his choice. On the human plane

whatsoever occurs, it is because of choice. Since this plane consists of the state which is half-conscious and half-unconscious, we occasionally choose things we don't want to choose.

This is very interesting. To say that we occasionally choose things we didn't wish to choose in the first place sounds very contrary. But, in fact, we do so every day. You don't want to get angry, but you do get angry. What does this mean? It means that the anger arises from your unconscious part, while the thought about not wanting to be angry comes from the conscious part of you.

Your conscious part says, "Don't be angry," while the unconscious part goes on being angry. You remain divided in two. One half of you is joined with the lower world—the world of rocks and mountains where everything is in a state of unconsciousness. The other half is awakened. It is filled with consciousness and is connected to the world that lies ahead—the world of wholeness, the world of the divine, where everything is fully conscious. Man is in between, and that's the reason he is in a state of tension.

It would be better if we say man is the tension itself—half of him being pulled to one side, half to the other. In other words, he does not have any individuality. He is schizophrenic. He sleeps at night and becomes part of nature; he wakes up in the morning and begins his journey towards the divine. When he is in a rage he is blind with anger; when he works on a mathematical problem, he does so with great awareness.

No one has been heard to say, while doing arithmetic, "I wanted to add two and two to make four, but I added them up as five." But as far as anger is concerned, a man admits he didn't

want to be angry and yet became angry. Obviously there does exist a gap between the state of anger and finding the solution to an arithmetic problem. Perhaps arithmetic is a part of our awakened state, while anger is a part of our unconscious state. This is the reason why man is in continuous anxiety, why he is always plagued by worries, tension, anguish. He is always in misery. He does what he does not want to do, and he cannot do what he really wants to do. This is how he is always in tension. Man is swinging like a pendulum all the time—sometimes to the left, sometimes to the right. That's why you can't trust him—now he is to the right, now he is to the left. You can't be sure about him because the man moves back and forth like the pendulum of a clock.

Beyond the human plane lies the third plane—that of total awakening. There is no choice on this plane either. However, there is a difference between the state of no-choice of the first plane and that of this plane. The first plane consists of the unconscious state. The chooser is not present, hence there is no question of making a choice.

What can a man who is asleep choose? He will continue to remain asleep. Even when his house is on fire he won't be able to decide whether to stay in or go out until he wakes up. There is no choice in the world of unconsciousness, because the chooser is asleep.

The world of consciousness, of awareness—which I call God—is the awakened state of nature. As soon as a man enters this fully awakened world, there is no more choice here as well. Choice is not there because the man is fully awake. He unquestionably sees that which is

right, hence he has no reason to choose. The situation for choosing arises only when things appear hazy; that is, when one is in a quandary, whether to do this or that; when one is caught in the situation of either/or. This shows he is unable to see clearly; everything looks hazy to him. Both things seem worth doing, and both things don't seem worth doing as well—hence the choice.

If one is able to see precisely what is worth doing and what is not, then where is the question of choosing? Then all choosing ends. Then one does what is worth doing and leaves what is not worth doing. Hence, on this plane a man cannot say he did something he never wanted to do—the question doesn't arise. He can't even say, "I regret what I have done," because the question doesn't arise at all. He cannot even say he committed a mistake which he never should have—that too is out of the question.

There is no choice involved in what a fully awakened person does. He acts only upon what he sees, upon what is worth doing. It is not that he feels he has to do it. Whatsoever needs to be done, it happens. So there is neither any choice on the plane of total awareness, nor any choice on the plane of total unconsciousness.

Choice exists on the human plane, which consists of half consciousness and half awareness. Here it is all up to you—you can go in either direction. You are standing in the middle of the bridge—you can either turn back or move ahead. It always looks easier to turn back. Why?—because the place to which we return is known territory. We come from there; the place does not hold much of a threat. The terrain is familiar. Moving ahead always looks dangerous because we don't even have any sense of direction.

That's why man drinks, becomes unconscious, regresses. This shows he is giving up on being a human. This way he makes it evident, in fact, that, "I want to get out of the bother of choosing. I want to reach a point where one doesn't have to make any choice. I want to remain in a state of stupor—where I may remain lying in a gutter, languishing on the roadside, talking filthy if I want to, not talking filthy if I don't want to. I want to be in a condition where whatsoever is happening is happening, where I don't have to make any choice."

So man arrives at a point where he no longer has to bear the tension and burden of making a decision. Hence all the intoxicants pull man back from the bridge. They call him, "Come back, you were fine in your previous location." You will have to raise consciousness in order to move forward, because as you move ahead on the bridge, you'll become more and more aware—only then will you be able to advance.

Moving ahead means only one thing—become more and more aware. This too is a matter of choice, and it is up to you and up to everyone else what to choose. You can't make anyone else responsible for it, because there is no one sitting up above who can be blamed for causing you to make a wrong choice. There is nobody up there. The sky is empty. There is no god or goddess, no divine being sitting up in heaven whom you can drag into the court and say, "We were moving along on a right path; you made us go astray a little." You won't be able to say, "Things would have worked out better had you kept yourself out of it."

There is no one you can address like that; hence there is no way to do it. Ultimately the

individual is responsible. He is responsible for the good as well as the bad. There is no one else you can hold responsible, who can answer why a certain thing happened—there is no one at all.

Of course those who have gone ahead say, crying aloud, "Don't turn back in fear, because much joy lies ahead of you. Once you reach there, all worries, all restlessness, all misery comes to an end." They say this, shouting aloud, but their voices sound strange to us because the place from where they speak is unknown to us.

"How can *we* attain bliss?" is how it appears to us. If, advancing this far, so much pain has been our lot, how much more of the same will not come to us if we move even further ahead? So a man feels he should turn back to where misery did not exist. Everyone says how blissful childhood was, so if man could, he would immediately return to the state of childhood. Since he cannot, he stays where he is.

Man says there was no misery in childhood. He may even go a step further and say, "It was so blissful being in the mother's womb." If he could, he would love to be back there, but he cannot. So he moves on ahead. We can choose to regress in life; we can return to the unconscious state; we can find ways of becoming unconscious—if that's what we want.

We don't even understand the language of the voices that come from afar because we have no idea what bliss is. We don't even know what sort of thing it is that people call bliss. We are familiar with what misery is—all too familiar, as a matter of fact. We also know the more we tried to attain happiness, the more we found misery. Now we are afraid lest, in our quest for bliss, we land ouselves in more trouble.

Since we came across more misery trying to find happiness, we take the state of bliss to be more or less similar to the state of happiness—perhaps as a little more intense state of happiness. But we are afraid of facing trouble as well. The fact remains that in attempting to gain happiness we encountered pain, so now, in an effort to find bliss, the fear is we may have to face even more trouble, even greater misery. So we hear these voices coming from far away, and with folded hands we salute and say to the people of the other shore, “You are gods, you are *avata*ras, you are *tirthankaras*, you are great! We will worship you, but we want to go back!”

We are afraid of the unknown. The fear is we will lose whatever little happinesses we have collected; they seem to be dropping away as we move ahead. The reason is we have built our houses on the very bridge that was only meant to be crossed. We have started living there. We have settled down there, we have turned it into our living room. Now when someone tells us to move ahead, we feel worried about losing the things we have gathered around us. It becomes obvious that moving ahead means leaving behind whatsoever we now have.

So we say, “Let the time come. When I am old, when death is at hand, when all I have begins to drop, that’s when I will come forward right away. Then there won’t be anything to worry about.” But the closer we come to death, the stronger the grip becomes. As death approaches we close our fists more tightly. That’s why an old man becomes utterly miserly; a young man is never so miserly.

An old man becomes a miser in every way. He holds tight. At the time of his departure the old man becomes paranoid lest everything he is

holding on to might slip through his hands. He holds his possessions firmly, lest his grip loosen. This very clinging to things so firmly turns one into an ugly old man; otherwise, the beauty and grace of an old man can be matchless.

We are aware of beautiful children and we know of less beautiful young people, but beautiful old men are very rare to find. Only once in a while does one come across someone who has grown into a beautiful old man. Otherwise, ordinarily, with the increasing miserliness and holding fast to possessions, everything starts becoming uglier and uglier. An open hand looks beautiful, a closed fist looks ugly. Freedom is beautiful, attachment is slavery.

Everyone thinks he will give up his attachments sometime in the future, at the right opportunity. He waits until the last moment and lets go only when death finally snatches everything away. Since man never likes to let go of things, it hurts when they are taken away. There is no pain in parting with things voluntarily.

Now this whole matter of moving ahead is essentially our own choice. An impetus can be given towards making this choice; there are laws for that too. The bridge is already there; it is natural too. Do you see my point? The bridge is ready to take you forward too; it allows you to go ahead. This too is nature. And the bridge is ready to provide you passage to move backwards. This too is nature.

Nature is prepared to greet you under every condition. On all her doors is a "Welcome" sign—which is dangerous too. Not a single door has a sign, "No Admission"; each and every door has a "Welcome" sign. Hence the choice is in your hands. It's sheer compassion on the part of

nature that it does not prevent you from entering any door. You are free to go wherever you feel like. The door to hell says "Welcome", and so does the door to heaven. Which welcome sign to choose is ultimately your decision. In that case you won't be able to hold nature responsible for putting out the welcome sign. Nature has put the sign everywhere. Nature had no problem, it did not create any hindrance.

To welcome means to allow freedom. That means, intrinsically, nature is absolutely free. We are a part of nature, hence we are absolutely free. We *are* doing what we want to do. Nature is assisting us in all our actions, but the choice is always ours. Don't misunderstand me when I say the choice is ours because, essentially, we are part and parcel of nature. Putting it in ultimate terms, it means we are the infinite possibilities of nature itself; we are the infinite openings of nature. Basically it is nature which, seeking through its infinite parts, knocks on its infinite doors—chooses, wanders, goes astray, and reaches.

But this is a very circular way of putting things—there are no nooks and corners. And the problem is that all the ways of nature are circular—none of its modes is angular, none of its courses is square. All its stars, moons, planets and satellites are circular. Their movements in space are circular. The entire system in nature is circular. This is the reason we find the circle used in many religious symbols. So nature is a circular phenomenon. You can start from anywhere and reach anywhere you like—the choice is always yours.

Once it is understood that the choice is always yours, then one can use the laws of

nature in a right manner. For example, while walking on the street you also make use of the law of gravitation. If the earth did not have gravity, you wouldn't be able to walk on the earth. By the time you lift your other foot, if the first foot did not remain steady on the ground and were to lift on its own, where would you end up? Where would you stand? When you lift your left foot, the earth holds the right foot—that's how you are able to lift your left foot. The earth holding the right foot is responsible for your left foot lifting. Should the right foot also lift at the same time, you've had it! While the earth holds the right foot, you lift the left foot. You put the left foot down and nature holds it until you have lifted the right foot.

This is how gravity works. But gravity also works when a man jumps from the roof. At that moment the earth welcomes him and pulls him down too. Just as the earth pulls the left and the right foot, it pulls the jumping man too. Now, since the bone of the falling man hits the ground, it breaks. We complain, "What kind of nature is this; it broke the poor man's bone!" But nature simply does its job. It says, "Welcome to you, come and get your bone broken."

The same law works. The same gravity which helped you walk will break your bone and make you a cripple. Nevertheless, you won't be able to hold it responsible, because nature merely does its job. It does a totally perfect job; it never falls short. It's faultless. Whether you move your feet, or break your neck—whatsoever you wish to do—the law of nature works as always. Keeping this law in mind, *you* have to choose whether you wish to break your bone—then you may jump from the roof. If you wish to

walk, you will need to lift your feet appropriately. You will have to watch that you don't go against the law of nature.

To me, science has only one meaning. The application of science does not mean we have conquered nature—there is no way to conquer nature. Science only means that we have discovered certain ways and means of living in accord with nature. That's all it means. Put conquering aside. The question is, who is going to conquer whom?

The fact is, we have discovered the ways of living in accord with nature. For example, nature was willing to run this fan a long time ago. We took so long to put the fan in the right place and make it work. Do you follow me? The breeze was always ready to blow from outside. We prevented it by raising the wall; we did not make a window. But if you did make a window, would that mean you conquered the breeze? You simply gave way to the breeze. The breeze was always ready to pass through.

Our being able to run the fan and burn the light with electricity does not mean we have found victory over nature. We simply learned the way to be in agreement with nature. Now we fix our bulbs and switches, lay out electric wires in such a way that electricity can pass through them. In fact, electricity was always ready to pass through them. Our act simply amounts to opening the window.

Science stands for the search for nature's laws favorable to the external world. Religion stands for the search for nature's laws agreeable to the inner world. There are certain laws of nature that exist in the outer world. If we conform

to these laws, nature becomes agreeable; if we go against them, it becomes disagreeable. In a way it is wrong to say nature becomes agreeable or disagreeable, the right way to put it is whether we are able to take nature's help or not. Rather, one should say that if we conduct ourselves in a manner that nature can be helpful to us, we stand to gain from it. If we conduct ourselves in a manner that nature cannot be helpful, we stand to lose from it.

For example, you are walking with an umbrella over your head and the wind is blowing against you. Now if you bend it forward, no harm will be done, but if you place it backward on your shoulder, the wind will turn it inside out. Here nature will not be at fault. You did not place the umbrella agreeably to the wind—that's all you'll be accountable for. In both instances nature was working in the same way. It was pressing against the umbrella when you bent it forward, but its force was towards you. It also pressed against the umbrella when it was resting on your shoulder, but this time it was being pressed away from you. So although the pressure was the same, the difference was in how you had positioned the umbrella.

Similarly, there are inner laws of nature too. A man who lives with anger has his umbrella resting on the shoulder. Now that will cause him difficulty—all his inner umbrellas are bound to fall apart. A person who spreads love is placing his umbrella forward; he is being agreeable to nature.

One who has learned how to love has actually mastered one law of the inner science. He has learned that love brings agreeability, harmony in the inner life; whereas anger creates discord, dis-

harmony within. This is very much like the law of gravity. In anger you break your leg, in love you mend it. Nature is willing to work in both instances, depending upon what you wish to do. In anger, man wants to jump from the roof.

Meditation is the ultimate agreeability of the inner life, the uttermost harmony, the most profound of all.

Meditation means that, from within, one is now in complete harmony with the ultimate law of life. The word Lao Tzu has used for it is beautiful. He calls it *Tao*. *Tao* means the law. Or the name given by the Vedic seers is also appropriate. They call it *Rita*. *Rita* means the law. Similarly, *dharma* also means the law. *Dharma* means your inner nature, the law. *Dharma* means: if you act according to the law, you will attain happiness. *Adharma*, an unrighteous act, is that which would go against the law and cause you unhappiness. This is the principle of inner science.

Meditation, in the ultimate sense, in the innermost sense, means to be agreeable—agreeability. In other words, one who is agreeable in every way; one who is nowhere in conflict with life; one who is at no point separate from life; one who has become harmonious with all the laws of life, he attains to the ultimate truth, the ultimate life, the ultimate bliss.

We exist under the same law too. But fighting against the very law, we end up in ultimate bondage—fighting against the very law. It's kind of like this: there are people who understand the value of gold and make ornaments out of it, and there are others who do not understand its value and make shackles out of it. There is a law that works on gold. There is a law that governs the

moulding, the casting of gold. Now whether you make ornaments or chains is entirely up to you.

One who totally establishes one's agreeability with the inner law of nature attains *dharma*. One who totally comes to an agreement with the law of nature in the outside world attains *vigyana*. These words are so beautiful they are worth understanding.

What is achieved through *dharma* we call *gyana*. What is gained through science we call *vigyana*. Both words are very meaningful. We do not use any prefix before *gyana*, we do not put any adjective before it. *Vigyana* means a specialized knowledge; *gyana* means just knowledge, natural—not any special knowledge.

Religion means having an understanding of how to become spontaneous, how to be one with the inner nature of life. Hence, it is just knowing—not a specialized knowledge. *Vigyana* is a specialized knowledge. It has to explore each and every direction in order to find out what would be agreeable to this law of nature and that law of nature. There are millions of laws working in the outside world.

Obviously, the more you go inside, you ultimately end up with only one law. And the laws keep on increasing as we move more and more in the outer world. It is like drawing lines away from one point. They will be one at the point of origin, but as they move away from the point their number will go on increasing, their distances will go on increasing. This is similar to the sun rays that spread all around. They are one on the sun, but in moving away from it, the one becomes two, four, a thousand, millions, and billions—they go on spreading. Their distances become greater and greater.

Vigyan, science, is a specialized knowledge—knowledge of each and every ray, hence specialized. Once science gets hold of one ray, it will find out all about it. As I was telling you yesterday, science means to know more and more about less and less. But in that case the ray will keep on becoming thinner and thinner—the greater the distance, the narrower it will be. That's why science becomes more and more narrow.

Religion expands, it becomes more and more vast, it keeps on becoming formless until *advaita*, non-duality, oneness remains at the end. Then there won't be two left. Hence, I say to you, there can be many sciences, not many religions. Religion can only be one because it is knowledge—not a specialized knowledge.

If we understand this, then it would mean that the laws exist, that we exist, and what we do with the laws and with ourselves—that capacity to choose—also exists. Whatsoever we do, we have the capability of living it through as well. Now, this is the way it is. One who is intelligent, however, continues to work towards enhancing the direction of bliss. One who is determined to choose stupidity continuously goes on diminishing the capacity to attain bliss. There is no one up there to be held responsible; the entire responsibility rests with man.

Hence my emphasis on *sadhana*, and my telling you repeatedly: get on with it, take a jump; the laws are firmly rooted. You are already on the diving board, but just standing there. The ocean is waving down below. You *can* take a jump. The sun is hot, the heat is intense, you are sweating, and the cool ocean is rolling below. You can, of course, take a jump and be in cool

waters. You are standing on the diving board. If you are willing to jump, the diving board is ready to help you; it has springs, they can toss you below. But you are standing there sweating in the sun. The diving board, the springs, are shedding tears beneath you. If you care to take the jump, they are anxious to help you. But since you are not taking the jump, the diving board is quiet. The cool ocean down below is watching you sweat.

Given this state of affairs, you will have to choose decisively, you will have to make the decision. It is fine if you wish to wait, there is no problem. But make a decision: "I want to wait. I don't want to be in cool water, I want to stand in the heat, I want to sweat. I don't want to jump, I'll stay right here." Make this *your* choice and then wait. I believe, if you did this, then even that decisive act would show you have grown. At least you made a decision.

But you are a very strange type of people. You say, "We don't want to jump in the ocean. We would like to enter the cool water; we know the sun is hot and we are sweating profusely, but we can't take a jump right now. We do wish to jump, to leap forward, but please wait. How can we rush into it? We will do it tomorrow, or the day after."

This stops your growth. By and by it makes you inert, you get stuck in the place where you are. You become used to this sweating, the heat, and to the nonsense that you would like to jump—but tomorrow. You will say the same thing tomorrow as well, that you would like to jump the next day. Then you will get used to saying this, you will keep on repeating the same thing, and all the laws of nature will wait patient-

ly. The sun will continue to shine, he will welcome you and invite you to enjoy him. While we go on sweating, the ocean will keep calling, "Come if you like, it's your pleasure. The cool waters are ready to receive you." The diving board will keep saying, "I am ready to bounce, but you need to make a choice first—you need to take off." This is how the situation is.

In my view, the real harm is not because of the fact that you are suffering from misery, it is due more to the reality that your misery is not the product of *your* decision. Suffer decisively! The suffering should be your decision too. If one wants to steal, then he should do so decisively, by becoming a thief. He should make it clear, "I intend to be a thief, and I want to say to all the holy men they should stop all their nonsense. It is of no use to me; none of their talk has any meaning for me. If they want to be holy, then let them be. I have decided to be a thief."

So remember, compared to a person who has become a holy man without his own decision, a man who has become a thief through his own decision would live a far superior life. Because the decision enhances his consciousness, the decision lends weight to his being, the decision raises his level of responsibility. When he makes the decision he becomes responsible. Being himself the decision-maker, when he decides, when it becomes his own choice, will is created. And when will is created, the consciousness is awakened. Then it can't remain asleep any longer.

Your making the decision alone will bring an end to the state of unconsciousness, because a decision cannot emerge in an unconscious state. Lacking decisiveness, you will simply go on drifting here and there, pushed by the society. The

father enrolls you in a school, so you go there. The mother finds you a job, so you take that job. The wife asks you to stand on your head, so you stand on your head. Then the children surround you; you are more and more confined. You are just pulled and pushed from all sides. So if you stay indecisive, the state of unconsciousness will become more and more condensed.

There is no harm if one has to make a decision—even for the wrong reasons. As I see it, there is only one wrong doing—not to make a decision. And there is only one virtue—to be decisive. So be decisive. It doesn't matter if you decide to be a thief, but make the decision with a total mind—then you won't stay a thief for long. One who decides with a total mind attains so much consciousness that he can no longer steal. He comes to such understanding that to him stealing seems foolish.

Even when people become holy men or women, they do so because they are somehow pushed into it. Somebody's wife dies and he turns into a holy man. A woman's husband dies and she ends up being a holy woman. A man files bankruptcy and becomes a holy man. Someone's father is about to become a renunciate; the son has no choice but to follow his father—the father initiates him too. Now this is meaningless, this doesn't serve any purpose. A decision must be there. For one who lives decisively every moment, his consciousness will continue to grow every moment. Make decisions in small matters, and learn how to stick to them.

Let me mention something briefly, and then we will conclude this talk. Gurdjieff used to have his followers go through a small experiment. As such, it was a very small exercise, but it used to

prove very effective in raising consciousness. It was called the "stop exercise". For example, if Gurdjieff were to address people sitting here, all of a sudden in the middle of the talk he would say "Stop!" It would mean everyone sitting here would freeze—your hands, head, legs, the whole body would remain motionless, like a statue. He would keep watching, and if anyone moved he would say, "Can't you muster enough will to stay as you are for a while?"

It so happened that once, along with his followers, he was experimenting in Tiflis. They were staying in a tent outside the village. A canal was situated near by. It was dry at the time; the water had not run through the canal yet. Three of the seekers were crossing the dry canal when suddenly Gurdjieff called from inside the tent, "Stop!" All the three stood in the middle of the canal, motionless. Meanwhile, somebody released the canal waters. The canal began to fill up, while Gurdjieff stayed inside the tent. The seekers stood there, unmoving.

Dauntless, the three remained until the water reached their waists. As the water began rising further up, they became worried. They couldn't utter a word because that would have meant breaking the "Stop" command. Gurdjieff was still in the tent; they were not sure whether Gurdjieff knew the canal was filling up. Perhaps he didn't even know his disciples were standing in the middle of the canal. They couldn't figure out what to do. They kept their courage until the water came up to their necks. When it began rising even further, one of them exclaimed, "This is foolishness!" and jumped out of the canal. The second one held out until the water reached his nose, in the hope Gurdjieff might call off the

"Stop" exercise. Then he felt it was dangerous to hold on any longer, and he jumped out of the water too.

The third young man stood there without budging. The water went over his head. Gurdjieff came running from the tent, jumped in the canal and brought the man out. Gurdjieff asked how he had felt inside at that moment when the water went over his head. He said, "The thing I was waiting for happened. But it happened only when I stood firm in my resolve. The consciousness I attained to when the water went over my head was simply the ultimate. Now I don't need to learn anything further—my resolve has come to its completion!"

This man stood firm in his resolve even in the face of death. Gurdjieff said, "This was all planned by me. I had the canal water released. I wanted to see if you were capable of something more than merely stopping the movements of your hands and feet." He dismissed the other two seekers and told them never to think of coming back—never at all. He told them they didn't have any business there.

The greater the intensity of will, the more profound the feeling of resolve, the more one's consciousness comes closer to being total. If you show your absolute will even for a single moment, that very moment you attain to a total consciousness. All the preparations are geared toward attaining this total consciousness; they are meant for creating that absolute will.

Hence, in my view, it is always good to make a choice. If God is having us dance like puppets—making some as sinners and others saints—then the whole thing becomes useless, absolutely useless. Not only does everything

become useless, even God himself turns out to be very foolish. What kind of craziness is this? If God alone is the decision-maker, and if he alone creates someone good and someone bad—makes one man Rama and the other Ravana—then what's the point? Then everything becomes nonsense, carries no meaning.

No, the individual is the decision-maker; there is no one imposing a decision on you from above. The moments when the decision comes from within you are the moments of awakening. Twenty-four hours a day, a seeker will look forward to making even ordinary decisions—it doesn't matter how insignificant they are. One should remain in search of making just minor, very ordinary decisions.

Right from the morning you should be continuously anxious to find opportunities for making decisions. And whenever such opportunities arise . . . The opportunities come your way all the time, all kinds of opportunities . . . If you can make decisions every moment, in a few days you will find your consciousness shooting up within you like an arrow. You will find it rising, gaining speed every day, simply through very ordinary decisions.

What we have named as sacrifice, austerity—and who knows what other foolish words—are all nonsense. If ever they had any validity, if ever any man had even made a meaningful application of them, that meaningfulness lay in their will. Someone decides, for example, that he will not eat for a day. Now, the value of this does not rest as much in the act of not eating, as it does in his coming to a resolution.

If this man eats even once in his mind, the whole thing is finished, it becomes totally

useless. Not eating means not only abstaining from eating physically, but even mentally. If a man could mindfully stay without eating food for twelve hours, he would have gone a long way in maintaining his resolve. Not eating is not significant by itself—it simply works as a peg for the man to hang his will on. After twelve hours the quality of his being is sure to change.

When I see a man has fasted for years and yet the quality of his being has not changed, I know he must have been eating in his mind, otherwise the quality would have changed. He has been fasting all through his life—going through this fast and that fast—and yet nowhere does he show any change of quality. The man has remained the same. He is like one who sets a lock and then comes back again to check whether it is locked or not.

I know such a man. He lives across from my house. He fasts, worships regularly, but he is a man of such poor will. I have watched him many times. He will lock his door, walk ten steps, then come back and shake the lock to be sure. I asked him, "Why do you do this? You locked the door yourself!"

He said, "Often I am not sure whether I locked it or not, so I come back to double-check. And what's the harm in checking at least once?"

I said, "Having already checked once, doesn't it occur to you the second time whether or not you have indeed gone back once and seen to the lock?"

He said, "How did you know? It does occur to me indeed. Not only once but twice, even three times I feel like going back and checking the lock—but I feel embarrassed to do it."

Here is a man who fasts, but he does not know what fasting means. The purpose of fasting is to bring decisiveness, to bring a decision-making power. Having made the decision once, a man should not turn back. And whosoever makes such a decision—which proves to be a point of no return—in the life of such a man nothing remains asleep, everything is awakened.

THE DISTANCE MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

Bombay
Evening of August 3, 1970

In order for one to stay awake at the time of death, or in order for one to successfully experience a conscious death in meditation, please explain in detail how a seeker should work on the following: the body system, the breathing system, the state of breathing, the state of one's being, celibacy, the state of one's mind.

Before one can remain conscious in the moment of death, first one needs to prepare to stay conscious in pain and suffering. Ordinarily, it is not possible for one who becomes unconscious even in misery to stay awake at the time of death. One needs to understand what it means to become unconscious when in misery. That will make one understand what it means to be conscious in misery too.

Becoming unconscious when one is in misery means one has identified oneself with the misery. When you have a headache, you don't

feel any distance between the headache and yourself; you don't remain just a distant watcher. Rather, you feel as if "you" are in pain. When you have a fever, it doesn't feel as though the body is hot, somewhere at a distance from you, instead you feel as if "you" have become hot. This is identification. When your foot is hurt and wounded, you don't feel just the affected foot; rather, you feel as if "you" are hurt and wounded.

Basically, we don't feel any distance between ourselves and our bodies. We live identified with the body. When hunger arises, one doesn't say his body is hungry and he is aware of it, instead he says, "I am hungry." But this is not the truth. The truth is, the body is hungry and he is aware of it. He is simply the center of awareness—continuously aware of whatsoever is happening. If there is a thorn hurting the foot, he knows it; if there is a headache, he knows it; if the stomach needs food, he knows it.

Man is consciousness, consciousness which is continuously aware. He is not the experiencer, he is simply the knower. This is the reality. But our state of mind is not that of the knower, it is that of the experiencer. When the knower turns into being the experiencer; when he knows not, but rather becomes identified with the act itself; when he does not remain a witness watching from a distance, but rather becomes the participant in the act, that is when the identification takes place. Then he becomes one with the act. This identification prevents him from waking up, because in order to be awake, in order to be aware, a certain distance is required, a space is needed.

I am able to see you only because there is a distance between you and me. If the whole

distance between you and me were to be removed, I wouldn't be able to see you. I am able to see you because there is a space between us. If this entire space were somehow eliminated, it wouldn't be possible for me to see you. My eyes can see you, because there is a space in between but my very eyes are unable to see themselves.

Even if I need to see my figure, I have to become the other in a mirror; I have to be at a distance from myself—only then can I see my reflection. Seeing the reflection in a mirror means my image is at a distance, and now it is visible to me. All that a mirror does is present your image at a distance from you. The intervening space thus created enables you to see.

In order to see, a distance is needed. For one who lives identified with the body, or thinks he is the very body, there exists no distance between him and his body.

Once there was a Mohammedan mystic called Farid. A man came to see him one morning and raised the same question you have asked me. He said to Farid, "We have heard that when Jesus was crucified he did not cry, scream out, or grow miserable. We have also heard that when Mansoor's limbs were cut off, he was laughing. How can this be? This is impossible."

Farid didn't say a word. He laughed, and from the coconuts offered to him by his devotees, he picked up one that was lying nearby and gave it to the man. Farid told him, "Take this coconut. It is not ripe yet. Break it open, but make sure you keep the kernel from breaking. Break the outer shell and bring me the unbroken kernel."

The man said, "This is impossible. Because the coconut is unripe, there is no space between the kernel and the outer shell. If I break open the shell the kernel will break too."

Farid said, "Forget this coconut. Here is another. Take this one, it is dry. There is a space between its kernel and the outer shell. Can you assure me you can break only the shell and leave the kernel intact?"

The man said, "What's so difficult about this? I will break the shell and the kernel will be saved without any problem."

Farid said, "Tell me why the kernel will be saved."

The man replied, "Because the coconut is dry, there exists a distance between the shell and the kernel."

Farid said, "Now don't bother about breaking open the coconut; set it aside too. Did you get your answer or not?"

The man said, "I was asking you something else, and you have gotten me into talking about a coconut. My question is, why didn't Jesus scream out when he was crucified? Why didn't he weep? Why didn't Mansoor writhe in pain when his limbs were cut off? Why did he laugh? Why did he smile?"

Farid answered, "Because they were dry coconuts, while we are wet coconuts—there is no other reason than this."

The reason why Jesus didn't weep when crucified, and Mansoor didn't suffer pain, but rather laughed and smiled, is because they had totally disidentified themselves with their bodies. There was no other reason than this. It was not really Jesus who was being crucified. Jesus was watching his body being crucified from within, and this he did from the same distance as the people standing around him—outside, away from his body. No one from the crowd screamed, none of them cried, "Don't kill me!" Why? Because there was a distance between them and Jesus' body.

Within Jesus too, there was a distance between the element that watches, and his body. Hence Jesus also didn't cry out, "Don't kill me!"

Mansoor's limbs were amputated and he kept laughing. When someone asked him, "What makes you laugh when your limbs are being cut off?" Mansoor said, "I would have cried had you dismembered me, but it is not 'me' you are chopping off; the one you are doing it to, you fools, is not me. I laugh at you because you are taking this body to be Mansoor's, just as you take the bodies you are in to be your authentic selves. You will obviously suffer painful deaths. What you are doing to me is nothing but a repetition of the mistakes you have committed in treating your own selves. Had you been aware you are separate from your bodies, you wouldn't have tried to cut my body. You would have known that you and your body are two different things. Then you would have realized that by cutting up the body, Mansoor is not cut."

The greatest preparation for entering death in a conscious state is to first enter pain consciously, because death does not occur often, it does not come every day. Death will come only once, whether you are prepared for it or not; there cannot be a rehearsal for death. But pain and misery come every day. We can prepare ourselves while going through pain and suffering—and remember, if we can do so while facing them, it will prove useful at the time of death.

Hence, seekers have always welcomed suffering. There is no other reason for it. It is not that suffering is a good thing. The reason is simply that suffering provides the seeker with an opportunity for self-preparation, self-attainment. A seeker has always thanked God for the suffering

he undergoes, for the simple reason that, in moments of misery, he gets a chance to disidentify himself from his body.

Remember, *sadhana*, spiritual discipline, is a little difficult to follow when you are happy. It is easier when you are miserable, because in moments of happiness one doesn't want to have even the slightest feeling of separation from one's body. When you are happy the body feels very dear to you; you don't feel like being detached from it for even an inch.

In moments of happiness we move closer to the body; hence it is not surprising that a seeker of happiness becomes a materialist. It is also not surprising if a person who is continuously seeking happiness believes himself to be nothing more than his body, because in happy times he begins to exist like a green coconut instead of a dry one—the distance between him and his body continues to narrow down.

In moments of pain one wishes he were not the body. Ordinarily, a man who takes himself to be nothing but the body also wishes he were not the body when his head hurts or when his foot is injured or when his body aches. He tends to agree with monks all over the world who go about saying that, "It would have been better if I were not the body." Feeling the pain in his body, he becomes eager to somehow find out he is not the body too. That's why I say to you, the moments of pain can become moments of spiritual discipline, they can be turned into moments of *sadhana*. But ordinarily, what do we do?

Ordinarily, during times of suffering, we try to forget pain. If a man is in trouble, he will drink alcohol. Someone is in pain and he will go and sit in a movie theater. Somebody is miserable and

he will try to forget his misery with prayers and devotional songs. These are all different ways and means to forget pain.

Someone drinks; we can say this is one tactic: someone goes and watches a movie, this is another. A person goes to a concert; this is a third way of forgetting pain. Somebody goes to the temple and drowns himself in prayers and hymns; this is a fourth strategy. There can be a thousand and one strategies—they can be religious, non-religious, or secular. That's not a big question. Underneath all this, the basic thing is that man wants to forget his misery. He is into forgetting misery.

A person who is out to forget misery can never wake up to misery. How can we become aware of something we tend to forget? Only with an attitude of remembering can we become aware of something. Hence, only by remembering pain can we become aware of it.

So whenever you are in misery, take it as an opportunity. Be totally aware of it, and you will have a wonderful experience. When you become fully aware of your suffering, when you look at it face to face, not escaping the pain, you will have a glimpse of your separateness from it. For example, you fell, were injured, hurt your foot. Now try to locate the pain inside, try to pinpoint the exact spot where it hurts, and you will be astonished to discover how you have managed to spread the pain over a much wider area, away from the original spot where its intensity is not so much.

Man exaggerates his suffering. He magnifies his misery, which is never actually that much. The reason behind this is the same—identification with the body. Misery is like the flame of a lamp, but we experience it as the dispersed light

of the lamp. Misery is like the flame, limited to a very small section of the body. But we feel it like the very extended light of the lamp, covering a much larger area. Close your eyes and try to locate the pain from inside.

Remember too, we have always known the body from the outside, never from within. Even if you know your body, it is known as others see it. If you have seen your hand, it is always from the outside, but you can feel your hand from within too. It is as if one were to remain contented with seeing his house only from the outside. But there is an inner side to the house as well.

Pain occurs at the inner parts of the body. The point where it hurts is located somewhere in the interior of the body, but the pain spreads to the outer parts of the body. It is like this: the flame of pain is located inside, while the light radiates outward.

Since we are used to seeing the body from outside, the pain appears to be very spread out. It is a wonderful experience, trying to see the body from inside. Close your eyes and try to feel and experience what the body is like from within. The human body has an inner wall too; it has an inner covering as well. This body has an inner limit too. That inner frontier can certainly be experienced with closed eyes.

You have seen your hand lifting. Now, close your eyes sometime and lift your hand, and you will experience the hand rising from within. From the outside you have known what it is to be hungry. Close your eyes and experience hunger from within, and for the first time you will be able to feel it from inside.

As soon as you get hold of the pain from within, two things happen. One is, the pain does

not remain as widely spread as it originally seemed to be; it immediately centers on a small point. And the more intensely you concentrate on this point, the more you will find it becoming smaller and smaller. And an incredible thing happens. When the point becomes very small, you find to your amazement it appears and disappears, goes off and on. Gaps begin to appear in between. And finally, when it disappears, you wonder what happened to it. Many times you miss it. The point becomes so small, that often when the consciousness tries to locate it, it is not there.

Just as pain expands in a state of unconsciousness, in the state of awareness it narrows down and becomes small. In such a state of consciousness the feeling will be that although you have gone through so many painful experiences, although you have lived through so much suffering, yet, in fact, the miseries were not really that many. We have suffered exaggerated pains. The same is true with regard to happiness. The happinesses we have been through were not as many as they seemed to be; we have enjoyed them in an exaggerated form too.

If one were to enjoy one's happiness with awareness, we would find that happiness becomes very small too. If we were to live through misery with the same kind of awareness, we would find it becomes very narrow as well. The greater the awareness, the narrower and smaller the pains and miseries. They become so small that, in a deeper sense, they turn out to be meaningless. In fact, their meaning lies in their expansion. They seem to be encompassing one's entire life. However, when seen through great awareness, they go on narrowing down, ultimately

becoming so meaningless they don't have anything to do with life as such.

The second thing that will happen is, when you look at your misery very closely, a distance will be created between you and the misery. In fact, whenever you look at a thing, immediately a distance is created between you and the thing itself. Seeing causes the distance. No matter what we look at, a distance immediately begins to take place.

If you look closely at your misery, you will find a separation between the misery and you, because only that which is separate from you can be seen. Obviously, that which is inseparably one with you cannot be seen. One who is aware of his misery, one who is filled with consciousness, one who is full of remembrance, experiences the misery as somewhere else, and he is somewhere at a distance.

The day a man comes to realize the difference between himself and the misery, as soon as he comes to know his pain is happening somewhere at a distance, the unconsciousness caused by misery ceases to exist. And once a person comes to understand that the sufferings as well as the happinesses of the body occur elsewhere, that one is merely a knower of them, his identity with the body is severed. Then he knows he is not the body.

This is the initial preparation. Once this preparation is complete, then it is easy to enter death with awareness. Not only easy, but it will happen most certainly. As such, we are not afraid of death really. After all, even to be afraid of death, one needs to be familiar with death. How can we feel afraid of something we know nothing about?

So, we have no fear of death really; rather, in our minds death exists in the form of a disease. That's the idea we have of it. When even minor illnesses leave us in so much trouble—the foot hurts and we suffer so much, the head hurts and we suffer so much—what a torture it will be when the entire body will hurt and fall apart!

The fear of death is the sum total of all our illnesses. Death in itself, however, is not an illness. Death has nothing to do with illness—it is not even remotely connected with it. It is a different matter if illnesses precede death, but there is no cause-and-effect relationship between the two. It is beside the point that a man dies following an illness, but one need not be mistaken and think that illness causes death. Perhaps the reverse is the case.

Because a man comes close to death, he grabs on to illness. No one ever dies of illness. As death approaches, he begins to catch illnesses. As death draws near, his body becomes weak, his receptivity towards sickness increases. He becomes vulnerable, he begins to look for illnesses. The same illness would not be able to affect him were the man closer to life. Perhaps it would not have been able to catch a hold on him.

Do you know there are some moments when you are more receptive to illnesses, while there are some when you are not? In moments of disappointment and sadness a person becomes vulnerable to illness, while a man full of hope and optimism becomes unreceptive to it. Even illness does not enter you without your willingness to accept it—your inner acceptance is needed.

Hence, no matter how many medicines are given to them, those who are of a suicidal mind can never be cured. Their minds remain unre-

ceptive to medications. Their minds go on seeking illnesses, inviting diseases with open arms, but keeping their doors very tightly closed as far as medications are concerned.

No, no one ever dies of illness. Rather, one becomes vulnerable to illnesses because of approaching death. That's why illness occurs first, then death follows. We normally think what happens first is the cause, and that which follows it is the effect. That's erroneous thinking. Illness is not the cause. Invariably the cause is death. The illness is merely the effect.

So the fear of death in our minds is really the fear of illness. First of all, we create the fear of death by adding up all our illnesses. The second thing worth remembering is that all the people we have seen dying, we have not really seen them *dying*, we have only seen them falling ill. How can we ever see anyone dying? Death is such an utterly inner phenomenon, no one can be a witness to it. Think twice before you ever testify to seeing such and such a person die, because it is a very difficult thing to see someone dying. To this day it has never happened on this earth.

No one has ever seen anyone dying. Only this much has been seen: a man fell ill, grew more ill, and more and more ill, and one day it became known the man is no longer alive. But, basically, no one has ever seen *when* a person died. No one has ever been able to pinpoint at which moment a person died, and what exactly happened in the process of dying. The only thing we have seen is a man being set free from life.

We have not seen a boat touching the other shore; we have only seen it leaving this shore. We have seen a consciousness move away from the

shores of life, and then after a certain point we have lost sight of it. The body that remains with us is no longer alive, as it was until yesterday, and so we think the man is dead.

For us, death is an inference; it is not an event that occurs right before us. We have seen sick people, we have seen the suffering of a dying man—the cramping of his limbs, his eyes rolling up, his face deforming, his jaws clamping; we have seen that perhaps the man wants to say something but cannot—we have seen all this. We have with us the sum of all this; it has become part of our collective mind. Whatsoever has been happening at the time of death over millions of years, we have collected it all. We are afraid of that.

We are also frightened of the same difficulties we will be facing at the time of our death. Hence, man has devised very clever means. He has dismissed the fact of death from the whole idea of life. We create cemeteries outside the town so that we are not reminded of death more often. Otherwise, ideally, a cemetery should be created in the middle of the town, because there is nothing in life more certain than death itself; everything else is uncertain. Other things may or may not be. The only thing which one can believe in definitively is death. Death is the most certain thing; no one can doubt its existence.

We can doubt the existence of God; we can doubt the existence of the soul; we can doubt life itself, but there is no way to doubt death. Death is. That which is so certain, we have put outside the town. If a funeral passes by, the mother calls her children to come inside the house, because somebody is dead. Actually, if someone is dead, everyone should be asked to come out so they can watch the greatest fact of life passing by.

Everyone is bound to pass through death. There is no need to deny it. But we are so scared of death we don't even want to mention it.

I have heard . . . An old woman came to see a monk and said, "The soul is indeed immortal." Old people often talk about the immortality of the soul for no other reason than the fear of death. That's the only reason why we find such a large number of old folks in temples, mosques, churches. Why aren't young people and children interested in going to these places? It'll be a while before they get the news of death. It will take a little time. They can afford to deny death for now; they can forget it for a while.

How can an old man forget death? He gets reminders every day. One day he finds his legs refuse to walk, another day his vision fails, sometimes his ears lose their hearing power. He receives hints from all around that, one by one, parts of his body seem to be giving in to death. Now he begins to rush towards the church, the temple, the mosque. He is least concerned with God. He goes there simply to make sure that, even though what he has understood life to be is coming to an end, will he perish too?

It is strange that societies which believe in the immortality of the soul are more frightened of death than ones which do not believe in the soul's existence. Take our country, for example. For ages we have been firm believers in the immortality of the soul. And yet, no race on earth is more cowardly than ours, no people are more dead than we are.

A nation which proclaims the soul is immortal suffers in slavery for a thousand years. How strange! One wonders how a nation which declares the soul is immortal and which is inhabited by four hundred million souls, can live in

slavery under the domination of three million. Those who believe the soul is immortal, that it can never die, what fear can they have of becoming slaves? What fear can they have of fighting the enemy? What fear can they have of facing death by hanging? How can guns and cannons frighten them? But no, something else is involved here.

Believing in the immortality of the soul is not the same as knowing the immortality of the soul. Believing in it is just a strategy for erasing the fear of death, for falsifying it—the same as creating a cemetery outside the town.

Every day people open their scriptures and read the teachings on the immortality of the soul so that they can be absolutely sure there is no death, so that they can carry the hope they will survive—so there is no need to worry. They assert, "The body will die, but we will still survive!"

Who are you asserting as your existence other than the body? You have no knowledge of it. You announce, "The body may die, I will continue to live," and the fact is you have absolutely no idea who you are other than the body! You don't know what it is that will survive when the body is no more. If you should ever think, "Who am I?" you will come to know that you know nothing about yourself except that you are the body.

So the old woman said to the monk, "I believe the soul is immortal. The soul is indeed imperishable. What do you say?"

About the immortality of the soul, the monk answered nothing. He merely looked at the woman, took her hand in his and said, "What do you think about death? Not much time is left."

The woman was annoyed. She said, "What kind of ominous talk is this? Please don't say such things. Being a monk, a good man, you should not talk about such ominous things."

The monk said, "If the soul is immortal, then how can death be ominous? Death can be inauspicious only if the soul is mortal."

But the woman continued, "Drop this and talk about something else. Talk about God, talk about *moksha*. I haven't come to hear you speak about death."

Actually, people go to monks precisely to hear things which can somehow comfort them and alleviate their fears. They want someone who can tell them, "You are not going to die." They want to be told, "You are not a sinner; the soul is eternally pure, uncorrupted. Did you say you are a thief? Forget it, no one is a thief. Did you say you are a black-marketeer? That's all nonsense. Can the soul ever engage in black-marketing?"

The result is, all the black-marketeers gather around monks who keep saying, "The soul is pure, without blemish. It has always been incorruptible, it can never be defiled." And the man sitting in front, an oldtime thief, nods his head in agreement and says, "You are absolutely right, Your Holiness! How true, Your Holiness!" He wants to believe, he wants someone to assure him that the soul is absolutely pure, so he can be free from the bother of becoming pure, so he won't have to be worried about becoming impure—so there will be no more fear.

We need to have a good understanding of the reality on which this mental condition is fundamentally based. We are not afraid of death, we

are afraid of illness. And we are afraid to part with what we call life.

For example, you push me out of this house. I have no idea what lies outside this house—whether there is a big palace, a forest, a desolate place, a desert—I haven't the faintest idea.

I am not sure whether I will be happy or unhappy outside the house. I don't know at all. Although outside the door lies the unknown, yet the fear of leaving the house makes me miserable. The house was dependable, known, familiar. It is frightening to leave the familiar and go into the unfamiliar. The fear is not really of the unknown, because I have absolutely no knowledge of the unknown. The fear is having to leave the known.

You will be surprised, but the mind is so possessed by the known that we find it difficult even to let go of our known illnesses. It is even difficult to give up our known miseries. Most physicians hardly ever cure your illness, they merely persuade you to drop the illness. Most medicines do nothing to your illness, they simply give you courage to get rid of it.

Recently, a well-known scientist conducted many experiments in this area. He took twenty patients suffering from the same illness. Ten of them he treated with medicine, while he kept the other ten only on water. The interesting thing was that the patients in both categories recovered together. Now what does this mean? What it means is simply that it is neither a question of medicine nor of water. The big question is that of persuading a man to drop his illness. If water does this work, then the patient can be cured by water. If homeopathic sugar pills succeed, then he is cured by the pills. If a charm proves effec-

tive, then it can cure too. If a patient has faith in a pinch of ash given by a *fakir*, then it can cure him too. Faith in the water of the Ganges also does the trick. Everything works.

Even a highly intelligent man such as Aristotle has proposed remedies which make us laugh. He was, one should say, the father of logic. He has proposed incredible cures; he could not have suggested them had they not been effective. The cures did work. For example, he has written that when a woman is in labor, apply horse dung on her stomach and the pain will stop completely—a wise and intelligent man like Aristotle says this. Can it ever be possible that a woman can get over the pain of labor by applying horse dung on her stomach? But apparently it did work. The reason why a woman recovered from her labor pains is that, basically, a pregnant woman never has a pain in the stomach, she simply creates it while giving birth to a child.

The more frightened a woman is of giving birth, the more her pain grows. And as she becomes fearful of the pain, she contracts the entire reproductive system. The child pushes its way out of her body, while the woman goes on contracting the whole system. This creates a conflict between the two, and the conflict causes pain. That's why most babies are born at night—seventy percent of the babies—because the mother won't allow the birth to happen in the daytime. She remains alert during the day and hinders the birth from happening. Hence, the baby is forced to take birth at night when the mother is asleep, when she is unaware. Therefore, seventy percent of the poor babies are unable to take birth in the daylight; they have to be born in the darkness of night.

There is a man called Levin. He teaches women to cooperate with their labor. He asks them to cooperate during childbirth, and has succeeded in having thousands of women deliver babies without any pain. He neither applies horse dung, nor gives an injection, nor ties a charm about a woman, nor brings any offering from a guru—he does nothing of the sort. He merely persuades the woman to cooperate. He advises women, "Allow the child to take birth without creating any hindrance; cooperate with the child. Be filled with the feeling of giving birth to the child. That will be enough, you won't have any pain."

There are hundreds of tribes where women do not go through any labor pains. They go on working in the fields, and when the time comes they give birth to the child. The mother places the infant in a basket and resumes her work in the field.

Man does not even give up those illnesses he has been suffering for so long, he holds tightly to them. People even insist on keeping their chains. This fact came to light during the French Revolution. Some of the most dangerous prisoners were kept in a large prison. They were sentenced to life imprisonment. Their shackles were never to be taken off; they were to remain on them forever. Only when they died would the shackles be removed.

The revolutionaries broke down the prison walls and brought the prisoners out of their cells. The prisoners had given up all hope of ever coming out. Some were imprisoned for twenty years, some for thirty, and some were in there for fifty years. They had become almost blind. Their

chains had almost become parts of their bodies. One could not say they were separate from their bodies. There was no longer any space left between their bodies and the chains. Do you think chains tied around one's hands for fifty years would remain separate? They are bound to become part of one's hands.

The man forgets the chains are not part of his body. He takes care of them in the same way he does his hands. He cleans and shines the chains every morning as he does his body—after all, the chains are to stay with him his whole life. If this is the case, then the whole matter is over.

So when the revolutionaries began cutting the chains off these prisoners, many of them objected. They told the revolutionaries that without chains they will feel very uncomfortable outside. But revolutionaries are always very pigheaded. They haven't learned yet that you can't be stubborn with people. If you force people to give up their existing chains, they will put on new ones. So the revolutionaries forcibly cut the chains and released the prisoners. What followed was incredible. By nightfall, more than half the prisoners returned, saying they didn't like it outside, they felt they were naked without their chains on them.

Obviously, if you remove the many golden ornaments worn by a woman, she will feel naked, weightless. She will feel as if she has lost something, as if she has lost weight. So the prisoners said, "Give us our chains back. We couldn't take a nap in the afternoon. Without the chains on us, how could we?" Even the sound of those chains became part of their psychological state. The added weight of chains had become so

much a part of their psyche, their subconscious, that even while changing sides in sleep they felt it.

Man becomes so tied to the familiar that he feels hurt even breaking his chains. We are caught in the familiar, which we take as life. It is because of the grip of the familiar that we are so scared of death. In the first place, we have no knowledge of death. And the first principle for awakening is awareness of misery, so that one can know one is separate from the body.

The second thing is the ability to witness. It has never occurred to us that . . . Sometimes, walking in the middle of the marketplace, suddenly give a little jolt to yourself, and for two minutes just stand still. Just watch without doing anything—simply be a witness. The moment you stand as a watcher in the middle of the street, suddenly you will be severed from your surroundings and out of them. The moment you become a witness to something, you transcend it, you jump out of it. But it is very difficult to stand on a street and be a witness. It is not easy to be a witness even while watching a movie.

The darkness in the movie theater becomes quite convenient for people watching the movie. One can cry in that darkness without any feeling of embarrassment. If we examine the handkerchiefs of people as they leave the theater, we can find out what went on inside, how many people cried. We know very well nothing really takes place on the screen, it is just a screen. We also know perfectly well that what we see on the screen is merely an appearance, that nothing is happening there. It is simply a play of light and shadow, just a network of rays projected from

the rear of the theater. The screen shows nothing except pictures. And yet, everything comes off on the screen, and we don't remain a witness even to the screen; we become a part of it.

Don't be under the illusion that while watching the film you really remain a watcher. Don't be mistaken. You become a participant too; you don't remain outside the film. Once you are inside the theater, for a short while you enter into the film as well. You begin to like someone in the film, and you dislike someone else. You feel sorry for somebody, while you feel happy about someone else. After a little while you become identified, you become a participant in the film.

It will be indeed difficult to remain a witness in life if we cannot manage to do so while watching a film. As such, life is nothing more than a film. If you look a little deeper, life is not very different from a movie. If you look even more deeply, you will find that just as the network of rays appears on the movie screen, the network of electricity appears on the screen of life.

Life is made up of a profound network of electricity. It is a great interplay of electrons. If the human body were to be dissected in every way, at the end you would find nothing except electrons. If we were to break down the wall of this room and look for the element it is made of, we would find that what is ultimately left is nothing but electricity. Then what is the big difference?

Really, what is the difference between a movie screen and the screen of life? We find the interplay of electrons on the movie screen too. The only difference is, on the movie screen the pictures are two-dimensional whereas on the screen of life they are three-dimensional. But

that's not much of a problem. It won't be too long before other dimensions, now lacking in films, will be met.

Just as I see you now, someday one will be able to see people on the screen exactly like that. Without any difficulty, it will soon become possible for an actor to step out of the screen and walk around in the movie theater. It won't be too long. It's just a matter of developing the technique, which is not too difficult. If a three-dimensional man can move around on the screen, his stepping just ten feet off the screen and walking around the hall is simply a matter of a little advancement in technology. It's not too difficult to foresee a film actress stepping from the screen, shaking hands with you, or patting you gently.

Now, the reverse is happening: the heroine does not step out of the screen, rather, you enter the screen and pat her. You can be saved this trouble! It's not good to cause you so much inconvenience; you need not go through the hassle. It will become possible for you to remain seated in your chair and the heroine will come and pat you!

What goes on in life anyway? What transpires when I take your hand in my hand? When I hold your hand in my hand, you see it either as an expression of love or of enmity. It is just a matter of interpretation. In both cases the hand is held; the difference arises only in the interpretation.

When a hand is being held, in a moment both things can happen without much difficulty: initially the holding of hands can take place with the feeling of love, while in the end, the feeling of enmity may set them apart. This is not difficult

to conceive. So much change comes about in a second.

When I hold your hand, you take it as my expression of love. But what is actually happening? Really, what is transpiring? If both our hands were to be examined, what seems to be going on? Some electrons are pressing against some other electrons. And the interesting thing is, my hand never touches yours. A space inevitably remains between the two. And sometimes it shrinks. When there is a distance the space becomes visible. As the distance shrinks, the space becomes less and less visible. If the distance becomes too narrow, the space disappears.

So when one hand is holding the other, there is always a space between the two. The pressure works on that very space, not on your hand. And in effect, the pressure of that empty space works on your hand. We interpret this pressure of the empty space as either love or enmity.

It is all a matter of interpretation. However, if one could become a witness and watch this holding of hands, an incredible thing happens. When someone holds your hand, don't be in a hurry to see it as either love or enmity. Just remain a witness to the holding of hands, and you will feel a total transformation in your consciousness.

When someone's lips are pressed on yours, forget about love et cetera, simply become a witness for a moment. You will have such a strange experience in your consciousness, one you may have never had before. Then it is possible you may laugh at yourself.

As long as you laugh at others, you are not a witness. The day you laugh at yourself, you become a witness. From that day on, you begin

witnessing. People all over the world laugh at others, only a sannyasin laughs at himself. And one who can laugh at himself has begun to see something.

Another thing is, be a witness in life—anywhere, any moment. For example, while eating, suddenly become a watcher for a moment: watch your hand picking up the food; watch your mouth chewing the food; watch the food reaching your stomach. Stand at a distance and simply watch. You will suddenly find the taste has disappeared. All of a sudden, the act of eating will take on a different meaning. You will find that *you* are not eating—food is being taken and you are merely watching.

There is a wonderful story. The story is . . .

Once a monk arrived on the outskirts of the town where Krishna lived. It was the rainy season and the river was flooded. The monk was on the other shore. The women of the village were anxious to feed the monk, but the river stood in the way. On their way they stopped by to see Krishna. They asked Krishna, "How are we to cross the river? The current is very strong, boats cannot cross. The monk has been without food for the last few days. Occasionally we receive some news about him. He is waiting on the other side, which is covered with thick forest. We must bring him food. Please show us a way to cross the river."

Krishna said, "Go to the river and tell her if the monk has never had any food in his entire life, if he has always been on a fast, she should make way for you." Since these were Krishna's words, the women believed him.

The women went ahead. Addressing the river they said, "O river! If the monk has been on

a fast for all of his life, then please give way so we can bring him food."

The story goes that the river gave way. The women crossed the river and fed the monk. The food they had brought was more than enough, but the monk ate it all. When it was time to return, they realized all of a sudden they had not asked Krishna the key to finding their way back. Now they found themselves in great difficulty.

Earlier they had said to the river that the monk had been fasting his whole life, how could they say the same thing now? The monk was not an ordinary eater; saying he was on a fast was far from the truth—he had consumed all the food the women had brought. The monk didn't even wait for the women to offer him second or third helpings. There were no leftovers.

The women became very concerned. The monk asked, "Why do you look so troubled? What is the matter?"

The women said, "We are in great difficulty. We only knew the device for coming here, we don't know the key that will take us back." The monk asked what the device was that had brought them to him. The women said, "Krishna told us if we wanted to cross the river, we should tell the river that if the monk is on a fast, it should make a way for us."

The monk said, "So what is the problem? The same device will work again. The key which can lock can also unlock, and the one which can unlock can also lock. Use the same key again."

The women said, "How can we use it now? You have already eaten the food."

The monk burst into laughter, a striking sound on the bank of that river. The women were

very puzzled. They said, "Here we are in trouble, and you are laughing!"

The monk said, "I am not laughing at you, I am laughing at myself. Go ahead and tell the river the same thing you said before. The river must have understood my laughter. Go and tell her once again."

With great fear, great hesitation and uncertainty, they approached the river and said, "O river, please give way if this monk has not had any food his whole life." They knew inside what they were saying was not at all true, but the river did make way for them.

The women were very puzzled. The miracle they had seen coming to this shore was nothing compared to what they saw on their way back. They went straight to Krishna and said, "This is too much! We thought you performed the miracle when we crossed the river the first time. But it is really the monk who performed the miracle. It was all right what we said on our way to see the monk, and it worked. But we said the same thing on our way back and the river gave way!"

Krishna said, "Of course, the river was bound to give way, because only he is a monk who never eats."

"But we saw him with our own eyes devouring all the food we carried with us."

Krishna said, "Just as you were watching him eat, the monk was watching himself eat as well—he was not the doer of his action of eating."

This is only a story. Don't ever try to cross a river like this, you might put some monk in trouble unnecessarily. No river will give way. And yet the fact remains, if we could also see ourselves in all our actions not as a doer but as a watcher, in

all our actions, then dying is an act too—the final act.

If you can succeed in keeping yourself removed from your actions, you will be able to stay removed at the moment of death too. Then you will see. The one who was eating until yesterday; the one who was attending to his business, walking down the street; the one who quarreled, fought, loved, it is *he* who is dying. Then you will be able to watch one additional act, the act of dying. Exactly as other acts involved loving, running one's business, being in the marketplace, dying will also be an act. You will be able to see the same person who did all these other things dying.

There was a Mohammedan *fakir* by the name of Sarmad. A very sweet but strange incident took place in his life. As has always happened, the *maulvis*, the priests, filed a suit against him. The priest has always been against the mystic. Sarmad was summoned to appear in the emperor's court.

Mohammedans express their belief through a *sutra*, a maxim, and that is, "There is only one God; other than him there is no God. There is only one messenger of God and he is Mohammed." But the Sufi mystics drop the latter half of the *sutra*. They repeat, "There is no other God than one God," but they drop the other half, "There is only one messenger of God and he is Mohammed," because they believe there are many messengers of God. That's why the Muslim theology has always been against the Sufis.

Sarmad was even more dangerous. He would not even repeat the Sufi *sutra* fully. He had even dropped half of that too. That *sutra* is, "Other than one God, there is no God." Sarmad used to

repeat only the latter half “. . . there is no God.” Now this was too much. It was okay to drop Mohammed’s name. That would not have made him an atheist, it would have simply amounted to his not being a Mohammedan. However, just because one is not a Mohammedan does not mean one ceases to be a religious person. But what can you do with a man like Sarmad? He said, “There is no God!”

Sarmad was brought to court. The emperor asked, “You say there is no God. Is it true?”

Sarmad answered, “I do say so.” And he proclaimed in a loud voice, “There is no God!”

The emperor asked, “Are you an atheist?”

Sarmad said, “No, I am not an atheist. But I have not known any God as yet, so how can I say God is? I say only as much as I know. In this *sutra*, so far I have come to know only one half of it, that there is no God. I don’t know anything of the other half. The day I come to know it, I will let everyone know. How can I lie about it if I don’t know? A religious man cannot lie.”

It was a difficult situation. He was ultimately executed, beheaded in front of the Jama Masjid in Delhi.

This is not a story. Millions of people watched him executed. As he was beheaded at the front door of the *masjid*, the mosque, and as the head started rolling down the steps of the mosque, a voice came out of the rolling head, “There is only one God. There is no God other than the one God.”

His lovers standing in the crowd said, “You crazy Sarmad, if you had to say it, why didn’t you say such a simple thing before?”

Sarmad said, “How can one know him until one has lost his head? Now that I know, I say

there is God, that no God exists other than him. But how could I have said this without knowing?"

There are truths we come to know only by passing through them. The truth of death is one of these. But in order that one may know death, one needs to prepare while one is still alive. The preparation for death has to be done while one is still alive. One who fails to do so, dies a wrong death.

Living a wrong life may be forgiven, but dying wrongly can never be forgiven, because it is the ultimate point, it is the very quintessence, the finale of life. Some mistakes committed here and there in life may be overlooked, but a mistake at the last moment of life will become firmly and permanently established forever. And the interesting thing is, you can repent for the mistakes committed in life—they can be rectified—but there is no way one can rectify his mistake, repent and ask forgiveness for it after death. Death becomes the final seal. Hence, a life lived wrongly may be excused, but a wrong death cannot be.

Remember, how can one who has lived wrongly in the first place die rightly? After all, life is bound to come to an end; it is life which will ultimately reach a point from where it departs. In fact, whatsoever I was during my lifetime, I shall depart as the sum total of that at the final moment of death. At that moment everything in my life will stand before me cumulatively. At the moment of death I will be the sum of my whole life.

Let me put it this way: life is a spread out phenomenon; death is a condensed one. In other words, life is a vast expanse, while death is the total, cumulative, condensation of this whole

expanse—the abridgment of it. Death is very atomic. Everything has come together in one atom; that's why there is no other phenomenon greater than death. But it occurs only once. This does not mean, however, that you have not died before. No, it has occurred many times before, but it occurs only once in one lifetime. And if you have lived this life remaining asleep, then death also takes place in the state of sleep. It comes anew in the next life, and again occurs only once.

So keep in mind, one who dies a conscious death takes a conscious birth in the next life—that becomes the other part of his dying. And the life of one who dies and takes birth consciously functions on a totally different plane. For the first time, he is able to grab hold of the entire meaning of life, of the whole purpose of life, of the heights and depths of life, precisely and consciously. He is able to grasp the whole truth of life.

So, I have mentioned two things. First, in order that you may have a conscious death, become alert to the suffering, be aware of it. Don't run away from pain, don't escape from misery. The second thing I said, while moving around and performing your day-to-day activities, suddenly stop and become a witness for a moment. Then resume your activity. If you can become a witness even for a few moments in twenty-four hours, you will find all of a sudden what a big madhouse this world is, and how, by becoming a witness, you step out of it.

When someone swears at you, immediately you become such a recipient you lose sight of the person swearing at you. As soon as he swears at you, you receive it. In fact, you receive it even before the words leave his lips. You receive the whole of it before the swearer has even managed

to complete it. Actually, you receive twice as much as is sworn at you. Even the person swearing is taken aback to see how you received more than he swore. You completely fail to see what is happening.

If you could really see . . . Next time when someone swears at you, become a watcher, don't be a receiver. Just be there and watch the person swearing at you. It will cause you to laugh at yourself, and the laughter will be unfettering. You will laugh at your being the constant recipient of profanities all through your life. Perhaps, you may even thank him and go your way. Doing so, you may leave the poor man guessing, because such an act would be beyond his comprehension. He would be totally at a loss.

In a period of twenty-four hours, whatsoever may happen—in anger, in hate, in love, in friendship, in enmity, while walking, resting, whatever—watch it sometimes for a moment, just for a moment. Give yourself a jolt just for one moment and watch what's happening with awareness. At that moment don't be a recipient, simply be a watcher of whatever is happening. Such calm will surround you in that moment; you will become so very aware, because at that moment you will be filled with meditation. That very moment of awareness is the moment of meditation.

If one could carry on these two experiments, then the rest of the things you have asked will follow. For instance, you ask, "If a seeker practices celibacy, will it help in death? Will he attain awareness?" In fact, he alone can attain celibacy who becomes a witness, not otherwise.

One who indulges is sure to remain sexual. An indulgent person means one who is lustful. He wants to indulge in sex. If one could be a

witness, lust and sex would slowly and gradually disappear from one's life. If a man could become a witness during intercourse, perhaps he would never enter into it again, because everything would seem so meaningless, so worthless. Everything would look so childish that he might come to feel, "What's going on? What's happening? What's all this anyway? How have I managed to do this up to now? Why has all of this such a hold over me?" But since we don't become a witness, we keep on repeating it.

Actually, don't ever be a witness if you wish to continue repeating your mistakes. Every mistake will then repeat itself. Then again, every mistake has its own season, just goes on recurring. If you could keep a daily record of your life for a few months, you would immediately find yourself to be one of those who are periodically mad.

Just this afternoon I received a letter from a friend. He becomes insane every six months, and for the other six months he remains sane. He often used to ask me why this happens to him. I said, "You are able to know the difference because the duration of your sane and insane states is clearly defined. This is not so with other people. They remain insane half a dozen times and are sane half a dozen times during the day, hence they are not able to figure it out. You stay insane for a solid period of six months and remain sane for another whole six months. The contrast is very clear." Ordinarily, a person goes mad ten times a day and behaves normally the other ten. Neither does he know nor do other people know when he is sane and when he is insane.

If, for a few months, you could keep a complete record of what goes on in your life, it will

immediately become clear to you that all things repeat themselves. For example, anger recurs at almost the same time each day. Each day, you not only feel hungry at a fixed time, you get angry at a fixed time too. You feel hungry exactly at eleven o'clock. As soon as the clock strikes eleven or twelve or one in the afternoon, whatever, you feel hungry. At whichever time you take your meals, you feel hungry at that particular time. The body tells you it is hungry. In the same manner, you feel angry, sexual, loving, at a set time. These are all hungers too, and they arise at a fixed time.

You go on repeating the same mistakes, because you have never tried to realize the fact that whatsoever you do is all mechanical routine. And occasionally, this creates a problem. For example, you are hungry and there is no food around. Only then do you come to know you are hungry. If you find food when you are hungry, you will never know what hunger is. The matter is taken care of.

Similarly, when you are angry and there is no one around to vent your anger upon, only then can you know what anger is. But you do find someone around. Sometimes it happens that you are hungry and there is no food around, but it is very rare that you may not find anyone on whom you can air your anger. And when there is no one at hand, a person takes his anger out on inanimate objects. If nothing else, he bangs his fountain pen, swearing at it. If this man ever becomes aware of what he has done, what will he think of himself? What will this man think, really?

A great deal of research is being done in America to find the psychological causes for car

accidents—in a large number we seem to be responsible. In a state of anger, a man presses the accelerator harder without being aware of it. Perhaps, mentally, he may be pressing his wife's head, or his son's throat, but in that particular moment his foot is on the accelerator. In this case the accelerator is a substitute for his wife or son. He goes on pressing and forgets he is driving a car. In fact, he is riding on his anger, but no one knows what he is doing. The danger is obvious.

The car has nothing to do with this man's anger; the car has no knowledge of his anger. So far, we have not been able to create a built-in system, such that the car will refuse to move if the driver is angry. We have not been able to develop any such mechanism. The man presses the accelerator, and the car takes it to mean he wants to raise the speed. The car doesn't know it needs to go slow at that moment. It doesn't realize the man is in a dangerous situation, that the man is unable to see anything at that moment.

Within a period of twenty-four hours, the moments of anger, the moments of sex, keep recurring. We move in a set pattern like a machine. If you wake up and see, you may ask, "Am I really living, or am I just moving in a circle like an ox at a wheel?" Living, obviously, cannot be similar to being an ox at a wheel. How can there be any life in moving round and round like an ox at a wheel? The ox simply moves mechanically. Has this ever occurred to you?

I was reading a book about a marvelous man who has done a wonderful experiment. He observed that you come across a man on the street and he says, "Hello, how are you?" and you answer, "I am fine, thank you." You may not have realized that the man neither cared to listen to

your reply, nor had he asked the question with the intent of hearing your answer. He must be wanting to ask something else. Since it would have looked a little odd to start off abruptly, he began by asking, "How are you?"

Even on the phone, the man asks, "How is your health?"—although he couldn't care less about your health; he has never been concerned about your health, nor will he ever be. Hence, no matter what reply you give, he is never going to listen to it. He will skip your answer and start talking about something else.

So the man decided to perform an experiment. One morning, someone called him on the phone and asked, "Hello, how are you?" And the man answered, "My cow gives a lot of milk."

The other fellow said, "That's good! How is your wife?" Hearing this, the man found out that no one really listens to what you say. We take things absolutely mechanically.

I was reading someone's biography. This man has traveled all over the world. In whichever country he went, he had to fill in all kinds of forms. He couldn't understand why he had to undergo the torture of filling out all these forms. So he started filling in absurd details. He did this everywhere he traveled. No government questioned him. He would write his age as five thousand years, and no one objected. Who reads these forms? Who bothers? Who is interested? Nobody cares. Life goes on absolutely off guard, mechanically. All answers are mechanical. Someone asks, "How are you?" You answer, "I am okay." Even computers can do this job. One computer asking, "How are you?" Another computer answering, "I am okay." That's how it is

going on really. There is no consciousness, no alertness, no awareness—nothing.

One needs to become a little aware of all this. One needs to be a witness. Just stop for a moment. Make any moment the moment to become alert. Give yourself a sudden jerk and look around in amazement. Just remain a watcher.

If you can prepare yourself in these two areas, you will become less and less angry, because a witnessing consciousness can never be angry. In order to be angry, one has to become identified, one *has* to become unconscious. A witnessing consciousness will go on attaining to celibacy because it cannot be consumed by sexual desire. A man of witnessing consciousness can never overeat, hence he doesn't need to take a vow to diet. Although we are not aware of it, food in itself is not the cause of our overeating. The reason lies much deeper.

For example, there is a man who overeats. Now he is not even aware of why he overeats. Has it ever occurred to you that when you are angry you eat too much? Have you ever kept account of it? Have you ever noticed consciously that you eat more when you feel the lack of love? Have you ever kept any record of it? Have you ever discovered consciously that when one's life is filled with love, one doesn't eat much? When a man meets his beloved, he loses his appetite. The hunger disappears in moments of love. But when love is absent, he begins to eat voraciously. Why? There is a mechanical system, a long lasting psychological conditioning at work behind it.

A child receives both love and food from his mother. The very first experience of love for a child is that of receiving food. If the child does not receive food from the mother, he feels a lack of

love; when she offers him food he feels love. So food and love are not two separate things in the child's initial experience; food and love are synonymous for him. For a child, the first experience of food and love is one and the same.

If a mother loves her child a lot, he drinks less milk, because he is always assured that he will have milk anytime, that he need not worry about the future. Hence, he doesn't find any necessity to overfill his stomach. So a child whose mother loves him a great deal will take less milk. A mother who does not love her child, who feeds him milk unwillingly, indifferently, who is always pushing the child away—that child drinks more milk, because he is not sure. The mother may give him milk after a while, or may not. Who knows how long he may have to remain hungry?

Lack of love prompts the child to take in more food, while the abundance of love makes him take in less. This becomes part of his psychological conditioning. Whenever love flows in his life, he eats less. He begins to overeat when love stops coming to him, although now the connection is not so apparent, now it is just a mechanical routine.

Hence, people who feel a lack of love start overeating. But if you become aware of it, you will be greatly amazed. The question is not of taking a vow to eat less when you are overeating, the question is that something like love has not happened in your life. If you realize this, then you are able to catch hold of the root causes of the fundamental problem. Where does the trouble lie? What is really the matter?

One man suffers from overeating. He goes to a temple and vows before a *muni*, a monk, to eat once a day. However, he now consumes twice or

three times more food during his once-a-day meal. He suffers from hunger the whole day and contemplates food the whole time. He turns into a maniac. Then he no longer remains just hungry, he goes crazy, he develops a craze for food. Then for twenty-four hours food becomes his sole concern.

Now in this country there are thousands of monks who live, brooding twenty-four hours a day about food. They are maniacs, they are mad. They don't realize what they have done to themselves, what kind of madness they are into. They are preoccupied with the thought of food all the time, as if that is the only subject left in the world to worry about, as if brooding about food from dawn to dusk is the only object in life. They think the problem will be taken care of if they work out the eating arrangement exactly as they want it to be.

When he was in America, Vivekananda had said, "My country would not have been ruined had our religion not become a religion of the kitchen. That caused its disaster." Can a religion remain worth its name if it turns out to be a religion confined to the kitchen? The reason why this happens is because we don't wake up and see our inner conditioning—what we do, and when.

For example, there is a man and he is an alcoholic. People are after him: they want him to give up drinking. The man wants to give up drinking too, but he never cares to figure out why he goes on drinking anyway. Why does he wish to become unconscious? There must be something in his life he wants to forget all about, something which he would rather not remember. There is something in life he would like to draw the curtain on.

If this man could become aware of the thing he is trying to forget, perhaps some solution might be found. But instead, he puts a cover on it. He goes on putting cover after cover, because there is something hidden behind it which he does not want to be exposed. Then his life becomes a continuous running about to cover things, and everything turns out a lie. Finally, a day arrives when it becomes difficult for the man even to figure out why he had wanted to forget things in the first place. He himself will have forgotten all about it. He himself will have no idea when and why he started drinking.

A man goes on puffing, dragging on a cigarette the whole day. Someone may ask, "What can the reason be? Why does he go on inhaling and exhaling smoke like that? There must be a secret behind this taking in and letting out smoke, because it is hard to imagine people all over the world smoking for nothing."

If he watches closely, a smoker can find out what makes him smoke a cigarette. Whenever he feels lonely, whenever he is without company, he immediately goes for a cigarette. He uses the cigarette as a companion, a rather inexpensive companion. It causes no problems. You can put it in your pocket, carry it wherever you like. You can sit alone and start working on it anytime. It's an occupation. In a sense, it's an innocent occupation; you are not causing any harm to anyone. You are harming yourself, more or less. You are just throwing the smoke out; you are just being occupied—that's all.

Once I was traveling in a train. When traveling by train, it is my habit to sleep quietly as much as I can. A man traveling with me in the same compartment was bothered very much by

my sleeping. He tried to wake me up several times. When I got up after six hours, took a bath, and got ready to go back to sleep again, the man could contain himself no longer. He said, "What in the world are you doing? I have read the same newspaper ten times, opened and shut this window several times, and here you are sleeping blissfully. I have never smoked as many cigarettes. It would be good if you stayed up."

He was right. Man is lonely even in a crowd. There are so many people around—the wife, the sons, the daughters, the father, the mother, the whole family, such a mob, and everything else . . . And yet man is lonely.

So far we have not been able to eliminate man's loneliness, so he goes on doing something or other to escape his loneliness. He smokes, he plays cards. He plays cards not only with others, but even with himself. The craziness reaches its limit when a man plays both hands. You can find even the most intelligent man doing this.

It seems even the so-called most intelligent man is not really intelligent. Why? One will have to become aware of this state, one will have to witness it. If this man, who plays both hands, could be filled with awareness for a moment and see the whole thing as a witness, would he not laugh at himself as you just did? Indeed he would laugh. He would wonder, "What is happening? What am I doing to my life?"

If this should become apparent, then one doesn't have to take a vow or an oath. Then one doesn't have to renounce anything; things which are worthless drop by themselves. If a man grasps the root causes and goes on becoming deeply aware of them, he reaches the point from

where the causes can be rooted out without any difficulty.

Remember, you will be in trouble if you begin pruning the leaves of a tree, because once a leaf is pruned it is replaced by four new leaves. The tree believes you are interested in grafting, it is not at fault. The tree feels maybe you want four leaves, that's why you are pruning one, so it produces four leaves. When you see the four leaves, you panic and prune all four of them. That gives rise to sixteen new leaves!

No, things are to be rooted out—simply pruning the leaves won't help. We have no idea of roots, we merely go on playing with leaves.

There are people who take a vow of celibacy. Once a friend of mine and I were guests in Calcutta. Our host was a seventy year-old man, one of the most honest people I have known. Confiding in me one day, he said, "Please tell me, what shall I do? I have taken a vow of celibacy three times in my life."

What the old man said was fine, but the amazing thing was that my friend became very impressed by him. He exclaimed, "Three times?"

I told my friend, "Do you understand what taking a vow three times means?" Then I asked the old man, "Why didn't you take it a fourth time? Did your vow succeed the third time?"

He said, "No, the third time I lost my nerve." He was an honest man indeed. Taking the vow three times obviously means he broke it each time. And breaking the vow each time, the disappointment and frustration was bound to become profound. Breaking the vow three times, the loss of his self-confidence was sure to intensify. There

was no way he could have shown any more courage to take the vow a fourth time.

So I told the man, "The monk who made you take the vow was, in fact, your enemy. You took him for a friend. He broke your will completely. Now even at the age of seventy you have no courage left to take a vow of celibacy." What's the reason? The leaves. You pluck one leaf, and three more come out. Can there be any vows of celibacy?

There are no *vows* of celibacy. One only needs to have an understanding of what sexual desire is. You need to become aware of sex. The fruit of celibacy comes from the awareness of sex. When a person becomes aware of his sexual desire, probes into it, understands it, lives it, recognizes it, he suddenly realizes the game in which he is engaged.

This game is no different from the game of cards I mentioned earlier. This whole game of sex is nothing but laying down playing cards. When this awareness reaches the depths of his being like an arrow, all of a sudden a man finds himself rising to celibacy. *Brahmacharya*, celibacy, is not some kind of a vow.

Remember, religion has nothing to do with taking vows. People who take vows are never religious; they can never be. A religious man is one in whose life vows blossom like fruits—as a consequence. The more he goes on watching life, the more he sees certain things constantly changing.

For example, a man is holding colored stones. You may cry in vain and tell him to throw the stones away, but he won't listen. Although they are colored stones, he sees them as colored diamonds. Looking at their shine and luster, he

thinks they are diamonds. Obviously, how can he let them go? The man says, "We consider those people who gave them up, as gods. We are ordinary people, we can't cast them away."

The same man, when he comes across a diamond mine, sees diamonds all over. Now, will we need to convince him he should get rid of his colored stones? Before he realizes what has happened, he will have already dropped the stones, run and filled his hands with diamonds. If one were to ask him later on what he did with the stones he was holding in his hands, he might say, "I am glad you reminded me. I had completely forgotten about them. I don't know what happened to them. I don't know when they were dropped." When diamonds are in sight, one needs to empty his hands immediately.

Life is a positive ascent, it is not a negative descent. Life is a positive achievement, not a negative renunciation. As the witnessing consciousness grows deeper, new planes of bliss come to light. The layers of misery go on falling away; much garbage is thrown out. You keep throwing pebbles away, and diamonds begin to appear in your hands. These two things, the dropping of the non-essential and the acquiring of the essential, will always apply in following the points you have raised in your question.

So let your awareness of misery become intense, sharp. In that state, stop identifying with your body. Let your consciousness not become one with your body. And in all your day-to-day activities and operations, be a witness, not an experiencer.

Let me tell you a short story to explain to you what I mean. I have always loved this story.

Just recently, it seems the birthday of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar was celebrated. Once he went to see a play. Ishwarchandra was a very well-known figure of his time, a very intelligent man. He was the honored guest and was seated in the first row. The play was in progress and there was a scene in which the villain is after the heroine to harass her. He tries to give her a hard time in every possible way. The scene reaches its climax when, finally, on a dark night in a thick forest, the villain catches hold of the woman. It is a very dark night. Everything is quiet; there is not a soul around. The villain grabs the woman. The woman screams, but her cry simply echoes in the stillness of the forest.

Ishwarchandra was watching the scene. He was a nice man. He couldn't take the villain's behavior any more. He lost his control. He got so enraged that he completely forgot it was just a play. He took off his shoe, jumped on the stage, and began pounding the villain. He started beating the actor! The actor took Ishwarchandra's shoe and placed it on his forehead to show his gratitude.

The actor showed more understanding than Ishwarchandra. Addressing the audience, he said, "Never before have I received a greater award than this. It is indeed a tribute to an actor's skills that an intelligent man such as Ishwarchandra should take the play to be real."

Addressing Vidyasagar, the actor said, "Sir, I shall treasure this shoe; I won't return it to you. This is my greatest reward."

If a person such as Vidyasagar took a play to be real, how can ordinary people like us comprehend what it means to take as play what we hold to be real? But with a few experiments of being a

witness, we will be able to understand what it means: reality will begin to look like a drama. If this happens, then it is possible to enter death with awareness.

SCIENCE OF THE ESOTERIC

Bombay
Evening of August 4, 1970

In one of your discourses you have said: in deep meditation, if the luminous body, the subtle body of a man or a woman goes out of the physical body, it cannot be brought back without the help of the opposite sex. Because by their touch an electric circuit is completed, and the consciousness that has gone out of the body returns immediately. You have even narrated your own experience when you were meditating sitting on a tree. In that state, your physical body fell down and your subtle body kept watching it from the tree. Then, by the touch of a woman, your subtle body re-entered the physical body. So the question is: In this technique why is the opposite sex needed? And for how long? Is it not possible to return to the physical body without the other's help? What is the difficulty?

A few things need to be understood. First, the entire system in this universe is based on the polarity of the positive and the negative. Wherever there is attraction, wherever you see the pull, you will find the two parts, negative and positive working there. The male-female division, or the division of sex, is part of that larger polarity.

In the language of electricity, the negative and positive poles attract each other with great force. The same principle is behind the attraction between man and woman. There is no fundamental difference between the nature of this attraction and a piece of iron being pulled by a magnet. If the piece of iron could speak, it would also say, "I have fallen in love with this magnet, now I can't live without it. Either I'll live with it, or die with it." If the piece of iron were able to speak, it would have written as many poems on love as have been written by human beings. Its inability to speak is the only difference, otherwise the attraction is the same. If you can understand the nature of this attraction, it will be easy for you to follow a few other things.

This attraction is generally experienced by all, but it can be of value in the spiritual sense too. And in certain conditions it even becomes inevitable. For example, if a man's subtle body should ever accidentally come out of his physical body—accidentally, without any previous arrangement or a spiritual practice to bring it out, it becomes difficult for the subtle body to return. Similarly, if a woman's subtle body happens to leave her physical body by accident—in some illness, in a mishap, because of an injury, or while pursuing some spiritual practice—without her planning for it, it becomes very difficult for the

subtle body to come back. Because in such a case the person neither knows the way to go out of the body, nor does he know the way to return to the body. The presence of the opposite point of attraction in such situations can be helpful.

The touch of a woman makes it convenient for the subtle body of man to return to the physical body. This is similar to placing a sheet of glass between the magnet and a piece of iron. The iron will still be attracted to the magnet regardless of the sheet of glass in between. So in spite of the man's physical body lying in between, the touch of a woman will help bring back the subtle body. The magnetic force will cause it to happen. A woman's subtle body can be similarly helped to come back if it has gone out accidentally. But it has to be an accidental happening; such assistance is not necessary if the experiment is planned beforehand. Why is it so?

If you have heard my previous talks, you may recall I had said that each man's first body is male, and his second body is female. A woman's first body is female and her second body male. If one has made arrangements to let his subtle body go out, then he doesn't need a woman's body. He can use his own second body—which is female—for the return of the subtle body. Then the other woman is not needed. This is possible however, only if the experiment is well-planned—the leaving of the body should not be accidental.

When such an event happens by accident, you remain unaware of the other bodies present inside you. Neither you have any idea of how these bodies function, nor do you know how to make use of them. So it is possible that the subtle

body of a man may return without any help from a woman, but this too will be as much accidental as the leaving of the subtle body. Therefore, one cannot be very sure about it.

No one else has done as many experiments on the inner life of man as the Tantrikas. Hence, in every Tantric workshop—where the greatest amount of work was done on the inner bodies of man—the presence of a woman had become inevitable. Not the presence of an ordinary woman, but of a special woman. Virgin girls were highly valued in Tantra, because if a woman has had sexual intercourse with many men, her magnetic force dissipates. This was the only reason why virgin girls were required.

If a woman has been in a sexual relationship with more than one man, or many times with one man, her magnetic force wears down. Old age is not the only reason why an old woman looks less attractive. The same goes for man. The most fundamental reason is that their polarity weakens—the man appears less a man, and the woman less a woman. If one could stay a man or a woman until one grows old, he or she would never cease to be attractive. The dynamics of staying a man or a woman until the end is what *brahmacharya*, celibacy is all about.

There is a lady in America who is over seventy—and there is no other woman in that country who can surpass her in attractiveness. Even at this age she needs special police protection. This woman has obviously succeeded in preserving her magnetic elements even until the age of seventy. A man can do the same as well. Prithvisinghji is sitting here. Even though he is quite old, the element of youth is very much present in

him. He has saved his magnetic force for a much longer period. Somehow he has still remained attractive even to this date, even at this old age.

So in Tantra, virgin girls became very valuable in pulling the consciousness of the seeker back in the body. These virgins had to maintain their sanctity very meticulously so that their magnetic power would not leak out. There are ways to increase this power as there are ways to weaken it. Various *asanas*, body postures, such as *siddhasana*, *padmasana*, were devised specifically with the idea of preventing this power from escaping outside the body.

There are certain points in our body through which our magnetic power flows outwards. For example, it flows through our fingers. Actually, in order for this energy to flow outward, it needs a pointed thing to pass through. It can't flow out of anything circular—there it keeps turning around. It flows out of toes as well. So hands and feet are the two main outlets from where this power flows out. That's why in *siddhasana*, or in *padmasana*, the hands and feet are meant to be joined together so that the energy flows from one hand to the other and does not move out.

Eyes are another big opening from where the magnetic power flows out. However, this power stops flowing if one can manage to keep them half-closed. You will be amazed to know that the energy flows not only when eyes are wide open but also when they are fully closed. It doesn't flow when the eyes are half-open. When the eyes are half-open and half-closed, a situation occurs in which the circuit created inside the eyes is broken. The energy wants both to move out and stay in. The energy is divided within—half wants to flow out, while the other half wants to move in.

Both oppose and negate each other. Hence, the half-open eyes became very significant—in Tantra, in Yoga, and so on.

If the energy is conserved from all sides, and the individual is aware of his opposite body within, the other is not needed. However, once in a while things happen accidentally. In the state of meditation, for example, a moment comes when without the person's knowledge this phenomenon occurs. In such a case help from outside may be taken. But it is not required except under unexpected situations.

As I see it, if husband and wife cooperate with each other, they can become partners in the spiritual sense too. If both understand completely each other's spiritual states, the magnetic and electric forces of each other, and cooperate, they can have the inner experience much more easily than a male or a female sannyasin can have it alone. Besides the fact that both come to know each other closely, their magnetic power finds a deep adjustment as well.

Hence one experiences a very strange thing. If a man and a woman are deeply in love, feel very close to each other, are very intimate, have no conflict, they begin to reflect each other's vices and virtues. So much so that if the couple is very much in love, their voices begin to resemble, their facial expressions look similar. A harmony between their personalities begins to show up. In fact, the electricity they contain within enters into each other. By and by both become homogeneous. But this is not possible if a discord exists between them. So it is useful to keep in mind that man and woman can be helpful to each other. The conjugal relationship between husband and wife is not limited merely to sex—it

can become a relationship to experience *samadhi* as well.

It's also worth noting in this regard that generally, a sannyasin looks very attractive. No ordinary person attracts women as much as he does. There is no other reason for this except that a male sannyasin contains a great reservoir of magnetic forces. Similarly, compared to an ordinary woman a female sannyasin looks far more attractive to men—for the simple reason that the magnetic power is stored up in her.

Should husband and wife also conserve this power and understand well how not to lose it, they can prove much more helpful in saving each other's magnetic power rather than causing it to dissipate. You may recall my previous talks in which I have said that even sex can prove to be the conserver of energy if practiced with the knowledge of various yoga techniques and the discipline of Tantra.

So remember, the role of the opposite sex is essential only in accidental situations. However, the physical assistance from the opposite sex is not required in every case. Many times, even when the phenomenon occurs unexpectedly, the subtle body returns. But in that case it is the inner woman that makes it possible. So one way or another, the woman is inevitably instrumental, the man is inevitably instrumental.

What are the precise methods for coming back in the body? Please explain.

Something needs to be understood in this regard too. Ordinarily, we don't realize, that

every touch of ours contains magnetism. When we are filled with love and touch a person, the person can feel the different quality of touch. When we are filled with hatred and touch someone, the difference is noticed too. When we touch somebody with indifference, the person knows as well. In all three cases the magnetic element in us flows in different channels. Furthermore, if one concentrates his mind just on one's hands with a total will, the magnetic forces become very strong. Mesmer calls them "magnetic passes"

Make a person lie naked. Spread both your palms four inches above his head—don't touch his body. Now vibrate your hands vigorously and move them from head to toe—keep your hands four inches away from the body. If you do this for fifteen minutes, the person will attain such enormous peace, such profound sleep—the kind of sleep he may have never had before. Don't touch him—simply create electric currents with your hands from a distance of four inches. Just feel the electric currents are flowing and, shaking both hands, move them from head to feet.

Aldous Huxley's wife has narrated a strange incident in her memoirs. She had met Huxley while his first wife was still alive. She was a psychiatrist and Huxley had approached her for treatment. She went to his house for his psychoanalysis. She made him lie on a couch and talked to him for almost two hours. She realized, however, that Huxley was such an intelligent man that it was very difficult to get anything out of him—obviously, intelligent people are difficult to deal with!

Whatsoever she said, Huxley knew more than that. The books she referred to, Huxley had

read those and many more. Huxley even explained to her the meanings of the words and terminology she used in talking to him. It became a difficult situation. The patient was wiser, more learned, more intelligent than the therapist.

Huxley was one of the wisest people of this age. The lady was just an ordinary doctor, a psychiatrist, while Huxley was a remarkable man. She became nervous in about a couple of hours. She realized that the use of scientific terminology was leading her nowhere. Naturally, those who are aware of the exact meanings of words often fail to reach the real meanings—they remain stuck with the literal meaning.

She became very confused. It became apparent to her that what she was doing would not work. But she remembered suddenly that Huxley knew something about the magnetic passes. So she said, "I have heard you know something about the magnetic passes, is it true?" Hearing this, Huxley got up at once. Up to now, he was answering her rather reluctantly, now he became very interested. He asked her to lie on the couch.

Just so that Huxley may have a chance to do something and take some interest, she lay down on the couch. Huxley had indeed become uncomfortable lying there for about two hours. So as the lady lay on the couch, Huxley gave her passes from a distance of four inches from her body. It's a very simple technique. Keep your fingers four inches away from the face and shake them vigorously. Feel electricity flowing through the fingers and move them from head to toe.

Huxley followed this technique and within ten minutes the lady went into a deep peaceful state. She had created the whole thing just as a

means to bring some excitement in Huxley. Then she got up and asked him to lie down.

The lady went home after a while, but she couldn't get out of her drowsiness. She remained all the while as if in a state of sleepiness, she couldn't figure out what was happening. She called Huxley's wife on the phone and told her how she was in that funny space. Huxley's wife asked, "Did Huxley wake you up?"

The woman replied, "No, he didn't wake me, I got up by myself."

Hearing this, the wife called out to Huxley, "You forgot to wake up Laura—she is still in the sleepy state."

Huxley said, "Before I could wake her, she got up on her own. Then we began talking and I forgot the whole thing."

Huxley had not withdrawn the energy he gave her through the magnetic passes; it followed her for about two days. So when the energy is transmitted, hands move from head to feet; when it is taken back, hands move from the feet to the head.

There are certain points in the body which are very sensitive; the energy passes through them very quickly. The most sensitive of all points is between our two eyes. It is called the *agya chakra*, or the third eye. It is the most sensitive spot in our body. If you sit with your eyes closed and someone were to point his finger in between your eyes four inches away from you, you will soon begin to see the finger inside—although you won't see outside because of closed eyes. The finger will not touch you from outside, but you will begin to feel its touch from within and the *chakra* will be activated inside. If the same experiment were carried out even on a

sleeping person, his *chakra* would become active in sleep.

The second most active point is at the back of your neck. It would be fun sometimes to experiment on this center. For example, a stranger is walking ahead of you. If you focus your eyes on the back of his neck from a distance of four feet and give him suggestions to look back, in a few minutes you will find the man looking behind him nervously. You can even make him look behind from his left or right—whichever way you suggest, he will look back. You can even suggest to him to turn on the next street instead of going straight ahead. After a few experiments when you become confident, you can make a person go astray. You can make him go where he never wanted to go.

When children are kidnapped, their hands and feet are not tied; rather, the center at the back of their necks is worked on. If one attempts to tie their limbs openly on the street, children can yell and scream and draw people's attention. The kidnapper can be easily caught. But if one knows how to act on the center at the back of the neck, one can take anybody with him wherever he wants. And the interesting thing is, this man X, for instance, will be walking behind Y, the person he is working on. So no one can accuse X of leading anybody away. Although Y, will be walking ahead of X, he will be only following X's suggestions. X can make Y walk, turn, move whichever way he wants. He can take Y wherever he wants.

So these two points are very significant. There are many other points in the body, but it is better not to discuss them. These two centers are simple and straightforward. As I pointed out in

my previous talk, any woman who went to see Gurdjieff immediately felt some work happening on her sex center. Many intelligent women went to see him and their experience was the same. As soon as they would go to Gurdjieff, immediately their sex center would become active—some strange intense sensation would begin making a circular movement at that point. It's a tremendously sensitive point. The navel is also one such center. There are many other centers as well.

So the question is, if a man's consciousness has gone out, where should the body be touched so that it can be brought back? Generally we need to know the man's personality; we must know which point in his body was most alive. If he is sexual, then touching his sex center would enable his subtle body to return at once. If he is an intellectual, lives through intellect, then the body would return by touching the *agya chakra*. If the person is sentimental, emotional, then by touching his heart the subtle body can be brought back. So it will all depend on the center through which the person lives the most.

Remember, when a person dies his life force leaves from the very center he has lived through most. And the same is the point for his subtle body to enter his physical body as well. For example, when a sexual man dies his life force departs through his genitals. There is a complete science which describes how by observing a dead man, you can tell which center in his body was most active. Because that is the center which breaks down at the moment of death.

We still observe an age-old practice at the time of cremation; it's a practice which although now totally meaningless, was conceived once upon a time at a great moment of realization. At

the end of cremation we break the skull of the burning body with a staff. The blow is made at the point of the *sahasrar*, the seventh *chakra*.

The fact is that the skull of a person who attains to *sahasrar* breaks open at the moment of death. His vital energy escapes from that point. Now in the foolishness of hoping that the life breath of our beloved one will pass through the *sahasrar*, we have been following the tradition of breaking the skull at cremation. This is quite meaningless because the man's life breath has already escaped through another center. However, one who at the moment of his death has attained the highest state of consciousness, a hole appears on his forehead because the life breath escapes from that point. Ever since people came to notice this fact, they have been breaking skulls at the cremation ground—affectionately, in the hope that this way the vital breath of their dead beloveds may leave through that center, although actually the person is dead, the vital breath is already out.

The center of our life is the same from where our vital breath departs. That's why on touching this center the subtle body returns immediately. Although this center is different in each individual, ninety out of a hundred people will have sex as their center, because the whole world is obsessed with sex. So if you are unable to figure out, touching the sex center will do. If that doesn't work, then most probably it is the *agya chakra*, the third eye. Because with people who are very intelligent or who use their intellect a great deal, their sex energy turns into intelligence. If both centers fail, then one should touch the heart center. Those who are neither very sexual nor very intelligent, are emotional people.

These three are the common centers. Then there are some uncommon centers too, but there are very few uncommon people with such centers. By touching these common centers . . .

In exercising this touch, a few things need to be taken into account. If a particular center is predominantly active in the person who is applying the touch, then it creates an unusual situation. For example, if a person whose *agya chakra* is active were to touch somebody's heart center, it will have very little affect. The whole thing has a science of its own.

Hence, it is always dangerous to practice these experiments on one's own—experiencing the seven bodies, out of the body experience and so on. A school, an ashram where there are people who understand the whole system, who can be of some assistance—is the place appropriate for conducting such experiments. That's why in the tradition of monks who decided to remain *parivrajakas*, wandering monks, the seven chakras, the seven bodies all disappeared. Because a wandering monk cannot make use of them. Monks who are continuously on the move, roaming around, never staying at one place, can't experiment much in these areas. Therefore, great experiments in these fields were carried out only in the monasteries and the ashrams.

For example, there is a monastery in Europe where no man has ever entered. The monastery is about fourteen hundred years old. Only nuns reside in it. Once a woman is admitted she can never come out of it. Her name is struck from the citizens' list. She becomes as good as dead. The world becomes meaningless to her. She no longer exists for the world.

A similar kind of monastery exists for men too. In creating this monastery the esoteric Christianity had done a remarkable job. No woman has ever entered in that men's monastery. No man who having once entered has ever come out of it. Both these monasteries are close to each other. Should a monk's subtle body leave his physical body, a woman's touch will not be necessary. It is enough to place him next to the wall of that women's monastery. The whole monastery is charged. No man has ever entered it. There are thousands of women inside. There are thousands of men inside the men's monastery. It is not an ordinary resolve—it's an extraordinary determination. It's a resolve to embrace death while being alive. Now there is no way to turn back.

The secret-most sciences could develop in these monasteries because they were very convenient for carrying on experiments. The Tantrikas had also created such facilities but by and by they were wiped out. And we are responsible for it, because the foolish puritanical attitudes of people in this country had declared Tantrikas immoral. If a naked woman is worshipped in a monastery, it will obviously upset the man of ethics and morality in the outer world. It is indeed dangerous if it becomes known that in a monastery a woman sits naked and seekers worship her. About the naked woman being worshipped by men, a man outside is bound to project his own mind, his own acts.

So we destroyed a great many monasteries, a great many scriptures in this country. King Bhoja alone slaughtered one hundred thousand Tantrikas. They were murdered en masse throughout the country, wherever they were found. The

reason was they were carrying on certain experiments which would have brought an end to the entire priesthood, to the so-called morality and the puritan mind of this country. If their experiments were right, then all our morality is wrong.

It was the experience of Tantrikas that if a man performs a particular kind of worship before a naked woman with the feeling of reverence, he becomes free from women forever. Similarly, if a woman performs particular kinds of worship before a naked man, she becomes free from men forever.

The magnetic forces between man and woman are actually designed to unite them. So it is not a small thing if a man becomes capable of looking at a naked woman before him with a feeling of reverence. Although nature has equipped man to enjoy woman, should a man become adept at looking at a woman with reverence his magnetic force—the energy which otherwise moved toward the outer woman—begins to flow toward the inner woman. That's the only way it can be, because his attraction for woman disappears. Now she becomes a mother to him. Now he looks upon her as a goddess. She becomes someone who is venerable.

Once the energy is reversed, where will it go? Obviously the energy is never destroyed; one simply changes its course. No energy is ever destroyed, only its course is diverted. If the woman outside becomes an object of worship, the energy begins to flow inward and the meeting with the inner woman occurs. Once the union with the inner woman has taken place, a meeting with the woman outside has no purpose, it becomes meaningless.

There were specific procedures, particular states of mind, special meditations, certain *mantras*, definite words, select techniques in order to worship a naked woman. The union with the inner woman occurred when the experiment included all these ingredients. The entire system was similar to how it is in a science laboratory.

We all know that the combination of hydrogen and oxygen makes water. This does not mean however, that if you fill your room with hydrogen and oxygen, water will result. Just the presence of both hydrogen and oxygen is not enough. A high voltage of electricity is required to convert the hydrogen and oxygen into water. The rainwater is caused by the lightning. Hydrogen and oxygen both are present, but only when the lightning flashes with such a powerful force that the heat generated by that electricity brings about a mixture of both the gases, is water created.

God forbid, but such an unfortunate day may come—thanks to our scientists—that we may be left with books which simply mention that water is created by combining hydrogen and oxygen. But just this much will not help in creating water. The same is true with the books on Tantra. The books contain only this much information, that by worshipping naked women with the feeling of devotion, the energy flows inward. But we have no idea how some charge of electricity, how some special occurrence of this kind is needed for this phenomenon to happen. Let's look at it this way.

You may have heard the Tibetan mantra: *Om Mani Padme Hum*. If you repeat this mantra, you'll find that several parts of your body are involved in uttering these words. For example, the word *Om* reverberates above the throat level,

while the word *Padme* reaches the navel, and *Hum* to the sex center.

Just uttering this mantra repeatedly will show how it penetrates into the different parts of your body. Now this mantra, *Om Mani Padme Hum . . .* If the word *Hum* is repeated often, its powerful impact stops the outward flow of the sex center. With the repeated use of this *Hum*, the sexuality of man is destroyed, it disappears.

Many techniques were performed before the naked woman. It is easy to find out whether a technique is working or not if the worshipping man is naked as well and the other seekers are watching him. But watching a naked woman from outside, one cannot be sure whether or not she is sexually aroused; her sexual mechanism is hidden inside her body. Watching a naked man however, one can instantly find out whether he is sexually aroused or not. Mahavira allowed only those monks to stay naked who had practiced deeply the sound of *Hum*. They could be permitted to remain naked, their sex organs were not affected even in sleep.

You will be surprised to know, but ordinarily it is difficult to find a man who doesn't have an erection two to four times during sleep at night—whether he is aware of it or not. In America, where a great deal of research is being done on sleep, a very amazing thing has been noted: every man invariably has an erection two to four times in sleep at night. Whenever dreams center around sex, the genitals are affected. If dreams can affect sex organs, then words can too. If dreams can affect sex organs, then pictures can as well. After all, what are dreams?

So there is a whole system for transformation, the energy can be turned inward. In the context of turning the energy inward, it may be

asked: Why wasn't there a Tantric system where the man would stand naked and women would worship him? This needs to be understood as well.

There never was any Tantric system where a naked man was worshipped by a woman because such practice was found unnecessary. There are a few reasons behind this. The first reason is that whenever a man is attracted toward a woman, he wants to see her naked. The woman has no such desire. Man is a voyeur. Man wants to see the woman naked; the woman has no such interest. This is the reason why during intercourse ninety-nine out of a hundred women close their eyes, while man keeps his eyes open. Even when you kiss a woman, she keeps her eyes closed. There is a reason for it: she doesn't want to live that moment outwardly. To her, this moment has nothing to do with what is outside. She wants to enjoy this moment inwardly, within.

This is the reason why men have created so many statues, films, paintings of women in the nude, but women have as yet taken no interest in nude men. Neither do they keep photographs of nude men, nor do they paint nude men or hang calendars of nude men in their homes—they have absolutely no interest in seeing a nude man. Women have never shown any interest in nude men, but man's interest in nude women is very deep. A nude woman may well become instrumental in man's transformation, but a nude man would only cause a woman to close her eyes—nothing more. So a similar technique is meaningless for women.

A woman's transformation happens differently. It is important to keep in mind that a woman is the passive sex—she is not aggressive, she is

receptive. No woman can be aggressive. She never even goes to anyone on her own to say, "I love you"—let alone being aggressive about it. Even expressing this much would be an act of aggressiveness on her part. Even when a woman falls in love with somebody, she works it out in such a way that the man goes to her and says, "I love you." A woman never goes and says such things on her own. She can't even commit this much of an aggression.

When a man approaches a woman and says, "I love you," even if the woman would like to respond favorably, she says, "no" instead of "yes". She refrains from cooperating in man's aggression by not saying even as little as "yes". She will say "no", she will refuse. The fact that a woman's refusal actually indicates her approval is a different matter. A woman's denial, in this case, contains acceptance. The woman's "no" will of course reflect the "yes" as well as her pleasure; but she'll be unable to say "yes".

Man has to initiate the woman in sexuality, he has to lead her in the world of sex. However, if a man seeing a nude woman, becomes one with his inner energy instead of becoming sexually aroused, the phenomenon proves to be of immense value for the woman. The inward going energy of a man helps the woman's energy to go within—it becomes an initiation for her. Just as man succeeds in leading a woman into sex, if he could also transcend sex in her presence he can initiate her into transcending sex as well. That's why a separate system for woman was not discovered—there was no need for it.

What happens to women who are of masculine nature?

This is possible. And there are reasons for it. It will be useful to talk about it a little. Actually, it is not quite correct to say that someone is a man and someone is a woman. In fact, no one is only a man or a woman. Being a man or a woman is a matter of degrees. For a period, a child in the mother's womb contains both sexes—it is neither clearly male nor female. The fetus gradually develops into either a male or a female.

This progression is also just a matter of degree. When we identify someone as "man", it means he is sixty percent male and forty percent female, or seventy percent male and thirty percent female, or ninety percent male and ten percent female. When we say "woman", it means the female element in her is proportionately greater than the male element. Occasionally it happens that a man is fifty-one percent male and forty-nine percent female—a very minor difference. Such a man will appear to be feminine. Similarly, if a woman is fifty-one percent female and forty-nine percent male, she will look very masculine. If such a woman were to find a feminine husband, she will immediately take a dominant role.

In a case like this we commit a linguistic error. In a situation like this, if we were to use language correctly, the man should be called the "wife", and the woman the "husband"; because the one who is dominant is the master. In that case we must drop "husband" and "wife" as synonyms for man and woman.

Truly speaking, "husband" stands for a particular function. To be a husband is a position in

itself—either a man or a woman can be in that position. To be a wife is also functional—either a man or a woman can fulfill that function. Many men live and function as wives. Many women live and function as husbands.

So the high or low male/female percentage in their personalities causes men and women to live such lives. And once in a while it happens that either a man accidentally, in some illness, becomes a woman, or a woman changes into a man.

Some time ago there was a case in London in which a woman turned into a man soon after her marriage. A suit was filed accusing her of cheating the man she was married to. The suit contended that she was already a man at the time of their marriage and the man had been deceived. It became very difficult for the poor woman to prove that she was indeed a woman at the time of marriage, that she turned into a man afterwards. But medical science came to her rescue and it was proved that she was a woman at the time of marriage, but on the verge of becoming a man. She was a marginal case—one more step and she could have turned into a man. And she moved that one step.

In the future it will not be too difficult for science to make it possible for men and women to change their sexes if they wish. And it is good, because people after all do get bored playing the same role—a change is needed.

Women who have the male element more in them, will become domineering. And such women will always remain unhappy. The reason is, such domineering element is contrary to their feminine nature; hence their misery will be endless. Actually, a woman likes a man who can

dominate her. No woman likes a man who becomes dominated by her. A woman with a high degree of male element will dominate and suffer unhappiness too, because she didn't find a man who would dominate her. Her misery will have no end. The situation with the man however is that his happiness lies in the woman surrendering to him. But if he surrenders to her on his own, the woman will always remain uneasy—she will never be satisfied.

So being a man or a woman should not be a marginal thing. But the kind of system we have developed is by and by causing men and women to live marginally. We have only our civilization to blame for this. In fact the way our culture has evolved, it has made the roles of men and women almost identical. This has proved harmful. Because of it the woman's femininity has declined, and so has man's masculinity—although ideally, both need to be on the extreme poles.

A man should be ninety-nine percent male and one percent female—one percent effeminacy is bound to remain, that he cannot avoid. A woman should be ninety-nine percent female and one percent male. For this to be possible, it is necessary that there should be different exercises for both, different diets, different kinds of education. It is essential that their entire discipline of life be different, only then will we be able to place them as two polarities.

The day man will grow in his understanding, we won't want women to become like men and men like women. That day we will want a woman to be like a woman and a man like a man. And we will want a big gap between the two. Because the greater the distance the more attraction be-

tween the two, the more juice flows between the two.

The greater the distance, the more joy of union between the two. The lesser the distance, the less juice flows between the two, the less joy in their meeting. But this is what has happened. In the process of becoming civilized, man has become more and more soft and tender. Since he neither goes to fight battles, nor does he go to work in fields, fight animals, or break stones, his feminine personality has begun to grow. He has become soft, he has lost his muscles. A very basic part of his manhood has disappeared.

The woman is coming closer to being a man. She is receiving the same education as men. If she needs to be successful within the male-oriented structure of society she has to compete with men, she has to perform the same jobs as men do. She has to be like man if she needs to work in the factory. She has to behave like men if she chooses to work in an office environment. In such situations she is just nominally a woman. Biologically, her being a woman becomes meaningless, because in all other respects she remains a man. She performs the same jobs that are performed by men. She stays in competition with them.

On the one hand man is becoming more and more womanish, less virile. On the other hand, the woman is moving closer to man, she is becoming mannish. This has proved very harmful. The greatest harm it has caused is that no woman is able to feel satisfied with any man. The same is true with man. Consequently, both suffer from discontentment twenty-four hours. This is bound to happen. Until we have enabled man

and woman to be on the opposite polarities, distinct from each other, their suffering is inevitable. This factor is responsible for their suffering—which is sick. Otherwise, there is no reason for it.

Can we not call this perversion? Can we not call these people perverts?

It is not a question of calling them perverts, it is an accident. It has nothing to do with perversion. It is basically an accident, and ways should be found to save oneself from such an accident. The one who is a victim of such an accident deserves pity, he should not be called a pervert. The person is not at fault. Unless we care to bring about a qualitative change in people with respect to their effeminacy or masculinity, which is not too difficult, all our efforts to correct them are acts of foolishness. By injecting hormones the person can be made feminine or masculine—but we don't think along these lines.

If a woman nags her husband, harasses him, dominates him, the husband never thinks of consulting a doctor. He prefers rather to bring her to a monk, a holy man, for him to counsel her. The fact is, the holy man is the least responsible in this matter, he has nothing to do with it. There is no question of anyone counseling the woman. She needs hormones which can make her more feminine. Such hormones *can* be given—there is no problem in it. If a man shows feminine tendencies and his wife no longer finds him interesting, there is no reason to be upset or

miserable. He needs the same kind of treatment as is required in any other situation.

Once the subtle body is out, it can't enter back into the physical body completely. The adjustment and harmony between the two is disrupted forever. This is the reason why the yogis have always been ill, and have been dying at an early age. How can we prepare ourselves so that the disharmony may be avoided? Can the possibilities of illness be minimized? How is this possible?

In this respect too, the first thing is: the moment the subtle body goes out of the physical body, nature's order is bound to be disrupted. The phenomenon is not natural; one should say, it is beyond nature. When a phenomenon occurs which is contrary to nature, or which is beyond nature, the entire harmony and adjustment of nature becomes disorderly. A great deal of preparation is needed if one wants to save oneself from such a disorderly state. Various *yogasanas* and *mudras*, yoga postures, are very helpful in this respect. In fact all the techniques of Hatha Yoga are useful in this direction. So you need an extraordinary body—an ordinary body won't work. You need your body to be made of steel so that it can withstand an unnatural phenomenon of such great magnitude.

For example, there was no fundamental difference between the body of Ramamurti and any other human body, but he had mastered a few

tricks. We see that trick working every day, but it never strikes us. You see a tire; when inflated it carries the heavy weight of a car. Take out some air and the car will not move. The air has to be in a particular proportion for the tire to carry that much weight.

Through a special technique of *pranayama*, one can fill lungs with so much air that the body can hold the weight of an elephant. The chest functions exactly like a tire, like a tube. In order to withstand the weight of an elephant, if one knows the proportion, the volume of air required in the chest, then there is no problem. Ramamurti had the same kind of lungs as we do.

The tube inside the tire is not made of any hard steel, it doesn't have any strength. The tube's only use is that it takes in its volume a specific amount of air—that's all. If that much air is present, the thing works.

Recently, a new type of car has been conceived which can run four feet above the ground. It will not require any tire-tube. In fact the same trick applies in this mechanism. The car will move so fast that the air underneath will have volume enough to bear its weight. The speed will cut through the air, separating its upper and lower parts, and due to the speed a layer of four feet will be created which will sustain the moving car.

This works on the same principle as a moving boat. As the boat moves with speed, a void is created behind it. It is this void that helps the boat to move ahead. Water from all sides rushes to fill the void; this pushes the boat forward. This is the trick that works all along. Should the water behave differently, the boat will not move.

So if a car is made to run at a particular speed, a four-foot thick layer of air can be made

underneath for it to function as a road. In fact, there is no need to make it really—it will be formed automatically as the car moves at high speed. Then there won't be any need for wheels; the car will simply slide along. Then nothing else will matter—only air will be needed, that's all.

Hatha Yoga has discovered many techniques which give the body a special discipline. Giving such a discipline makes the difference. That's why a *hatha* yogi never dies young. A normal *raja* yogi dies at a young age—such as Vivekananda or Shankaracharya, but not a *hatha* yogi. And the reason is that the *hatha* yogi gives a total discipline to his body before such a happening can take place. In order to prepare his body to withstand any unnatural situation, he performs many unnatural practices.

For example, when it is hot outside, he will cover himself with a blanket. Sufi mystics wrap a blanket around themselves. The word *suf* means wool. One who always covers himself with a woolen wraparound is known as a Sufi. There is no other meaning of the word "sufi".

All Sufi monks in the Arab world, where the sun is burning hot, move around in blankets. In that scorching heat they wrap themselves in a woolen blanket. They create a very unnatural situation. As it is, the sun is sizzling hot, there is no greenery anywhere around, and a man is sitting there wrapped up in a blanket. He is making his body able to withstand unnatural conditions. In Tibet a lama sits naked on the snow, and you will be shocked to see perspiration running down his body. This lama is working on his body to perspire even under the falling snow. His effort is very unnatural.

There are many such ways of preparing the body. If the body has been made to pass through

these preparations, it becomes fit to withstand any unnatural happening. Then no harm is caused to the body. But ordinarily, these preparations take years. Consequently, the discipline of *Raja Yoga* finds it useless to spend so many years in preparation just to live a little longer. *Hatha Yoga* requires years of preparation. Twenty or thirty years are minimum—thirty years are needed at least. If a man begins at the age of fifteen, he would be fifty by the time he is fully prepared.

Hence, the discipline of *Raja Yoga* decided not to be so much concerned about the body. If such a state does occur and the body dies, then so be it. What is the need for saving it? So these preparations were abandoned.

That's why Shankaracharya died at the age of thirty-three. The reason being that his body was not prepared to handle an event of such magnitude. But there was no need for such a preparation. If it appears necessary then it is all right—otherwise, no need to bother. If one has to work for years in order that the body may last for only thirty-three years, and if the body is saved to last for thirty-three years more, then the arrangement doesn't prove to be of much benefit. If I have to work from the time I am fifteen until I am fifty, I will already have lost thirty-five years in preparation. Should I remain alive for another thirty-five years—till the age of eighty-five—the sum total of years that I will have "lived" will still be thirty-five. So it has no meaning.

If someone were to have said to Shankaracharya, "You could have lived for seventy years if you had practiced *Hatha Yoga*." Shankaracharya would have replied, "But I would have had to work forty years for it. I find making such

an effort unnecessary. I like to die at the age of thirty-three. There is nothing wrong in it."

Hence, gradually *Hatha* Yoga lagged behind. The reason was that no one was ready to follow its long practices. But my feeling is, *Hatha* Yoga can come back in the future if its practices are followed with the help of science. As I see it, what took thirty-five years can now be completed in five years with the help of science. Time can be saved with the maximum use of science. However, it will be a while before the scientific *Hatha* Yoga can come into being. I believe scientific *Hatha* Yoga will be born in the West, not in India, because India doesn't have any scientific environment at all.

So time can be saved, but it doesn't serve any particular purpose. It might be useful to save time under very special circumstances, but that too will happen only on the gross level, the level of the physical body. For Shankaracharya it may not be useful to continue living but for others it can be. That's why even if remotely, even if barely, *Hatha* Yoga is still meaningful. One could have said to Shankaracharya, "Granted that extending life is of no use to you. However, if you could live for thirty-five years more, it would benefit many people." This is the only excuse which can bring back *Hatha* Yoga.

When the subtle body separates from the gross body, the adjustment between the two is interrupted. It is almost like once you take apart the engine of a car, you can reassemble it, but it does shorten the life of the engine. That's why the buyer first makes sure the engine of the car was not dismantled before. Even if the engine has been put together exactly the way it should be, it does lose its longevity. The reason is that it

cannot be the same—even a little change in its original adjustment affects the life of the engine.

Furthermore, in our body there are some elements that die very quickly; there are other elements that take a little longer to die. And there are some elements that refuse to die even after the man is dead. Even in the grave the dead man's nails and hair keep growing for some time. They keep doing their job and take a longer time to die.

Death occurs on many levels. In fact there are several arrangements in your body which are automatic—even the presence of your soul is not needed for them to function. For example, I am sitting here talking to you. If I leave this room, the talking would stop but the fan will go on moving, because the fan has its own arrangement—it has nothing to do with my presence.

There are two kinds of systems in our body. One system is such that it will come to an end as soon as the consciousness leaves the body. Another system keeps working for a short while even after the consciousness has left the body. It is automatic, it has a built-in arrangement to continue to function for an extended period of time. The consciousness will move out and the hair won't know the man is dead. The hair will take quite a while to know the man is gone, that it need not grow anymore.

So there are certain elements within us which die very soon—there are some which die in six seconds. For example, in case of a heart attack. A man can survive a heart attack if aid reaches him in six seconds. Basically, a heart attack is not a death; it is just a structural fault which can be set right. In the First World War about fifty people were saved like this in Russia. If the aid reached in six seconds to soldiers who

died of a heart attack, they survived. But after six seconds certain elements die, and then it becomes very difficult to revive them. The delicate parts of our brain die very soon—immediately.

So if the subtle body stays out for too long, then it becomes very necessary to protect the physical body; otherwise, some of its elements will begin to die. However, you won't be able to gauge how long the subtle body remained outside, because the gross and the subtle body exist on a different time scale. For instance, if my subtle body goes out, it may seem like I stayed for years in that state. But after returning to the physical body I may find not even a second has elapsed. The time scales for both are different.

It is like this: A man dozes off and dreams he is being married, the marriage procession is moving on, then he had children, and they grow up and now they are being married. He wakes up and narrates his long dream. One may tell him, "But you dozed off for only a minute, how can such a long dream take place in such a short time?" It can; the time scale is different. Such a long dream can take place in one minute, for the simple reason that its time measurement is very different from that of the waking state—it is very fast, speedy.

If the subtle body stayed out even for a minute, it may seem to you as if you have been out for years. It doesn't give you any idea how long you remained outside really. In that condition it is absolutely necessary that the body is preserved—which is very difficult. However, if complete arrangements are made, one's subtle body can stay outside for a long time.

There is an incident in the life of Shankaracharya which is worth relating. It is meaningless to talk of how long he stayed outside in terms of

his subtle body's time scale, but according to our time scale he remained outside his physical body for six months. A woman got him into trouble.

He had a debate with Mandan Mishra which Mandan lost. But Mandan's wife made a very womanly argument, which only women can make. She said, "Only one half of Mandan Mishra has lost. I, the other half of him, am still alive. Until you have defeated me, you can't claim to have defeated Mandan Mishra totally."

Shankara was put into difficulty. Although what the woman said was right, it didn't really carry any weight. Mandan Mishra was fully defeated. One doesn't have to defeat Gama, the wrestler, and his wife too in order to become the winner. But the wife of Mandan Mishra, Bharati, was worth having a debate with. The world has seen very few learned women of her caliber. So the idea of debating with her appealed to Shankara. He thought it would be fun. He figured if Mandan couldn't win, how long would Bharati last before him? But he was mistaken.

It is very easy to defeat a man, but it is not so easy to defeat a woman, because the arguments of man and woman, winning or losing, are never the same. They follow a different logic. That's why so often husbands and wives don't understand each other. Their ways of reasoning are different, they are never harmonious. They often go parallel, never meeting anywhere.

So Shankara thought Bharati would discuss matters like *Brahman*, et cetera. But she didn't raise any issue regarding *Brahman*, because she had witnessed how Mandan Mishra had gotten himself in trouble on that ground. She knew very well any discussion of *Brahman* and *maya* will be of no use. So she said to Shankara, "Please say something about sex."

Shankara was at a loss. He said, "I am an accomplished celibate. Please don't ask me anything about sex."

Bharati said, "If you know nothing about sex, then what else do you know? When you don't know even this much, I wonder what you may be knowing about the *Brahman*, *maya* and so on. You will have to say something about sex because, after all, it is the very source of this world you call *maya*. I'll debate only on that topic."

Shankara said, "Please allow me six months' time to learn about this subject. I have no knowledge of it, no one ever taught me. I don't know the secret of sex."

In order to learn the secret of sex, Shankara had to leave his body and enter into another body. Here one may ask, "Why could he not have learned through his own body?" He could have, but his entire life energy had become so introverted, the entire flow of energy had moved so deep inside, that it was difficult to draw it out. He could have, of course, related with a woman using his own body. If he had set out to know what sex was all about, he could have related with any woman by means of his own body, but the problem was that his whole bioenergy had turned inward. Drawing it out would have required more than six months. It was not a simple thing. It is easy to draw the energy within from without, but to draw it out again is very difficult. It is easy to drop pebbles and pick diamonds, but very difficult to give up diamonds for pebbles.

So Shankaracharya was in a predicament. He knew his body was no good for the challenge at hand. He asked his friends to go and find out if anyone has just died so that he may enter his body. Then he told them to guard his own body

zealously till he returned. He entered into the dead body of a king, lived through it for six months, and then came back.

Shankara's body was maintained for six months. This kind of guarding and maintenance of the body is an extremely difficult task. Only individuals of incredible devotion must have been entrusted with this responsibility.

As I mentioned earlier, a Tibetan seeker sits out in the open in the biting cold and makes his body perspire. This is all a matter of will. Through his determination he denies the reality of the bitter cold and creates another reality that the sun is shining and it is hot. Merely by his resolve, he subordinates his circumstances to his state of mind. The actual situation around him is that of the falling snow, but closing his eyes he denies that situation. He suggests to himself that it is not snowing, that the sun is shining hot. He causes this suggestion to go so deep within, that a moment comes when his every breath, every cell of his body, every part of his being begins to feel the heat. Then how can he not perspire? His very perspiration shows that he made his state of mind to prevail upon the circumstances.

In a sense, all yoga, is nothing but allowing the state of mind to overcome the circumstances. And all worldliness in a sense is nothing but subjecting the state of mind to the circumstances.

It has not been recorded or even mentioned anywhere exactly what Shankara's friends did in order to preserve his physical body. For six months, a group of his devotees sat around his body without breaking the circle. The idea was to maintain a fixed number of people present all the time. They would take turns with others, but basically everyone present was required to remain

awake and alert all twenty-four hours. A special environment had to be maintained in the cave where the body was being guarded. It was necessary that certain thought-waves prevailed in that cave.

About seven individuals were needed to sit around the body feeling intensely that they are not breathing, Shankara is; they are not alive, but Shankara is. And their bio-electricity had to flow continuously into Shankara's body. The hands of these seven people were to be placed upon Shankara's seven *chakras*. It was essential that the bio-electricity of these seven people be poured uninterruptedly into the seven *chakras* of Shankara; only then was it possible to preserve Shankara's body for six months. Even a moment's lapse was enough to break the circuit, causing the body to lose its temperature.

It was imperative that the same degree of temperature which is present in the normal living human being should be maintained in Shankara's body. Not even the slightest variation was allowed in his body temperature. And this body heat could not be created by any other external means except that these seven individuals continue to pass their whole life energy, all their magnetic forces through the seven *chakras* of Shankara's body.

Throughout this experiment, the body never comes to know that the man is not present, because the seven individuals supply the same energy that the body received from the man under normal conditions. Do you follow what I am saying? The body never comes to know its seven *chakras* are no longer receiving energy from the man's consciousness, precisely because the *chakras* go on receiving a non-stop flow of

energy from the seven individuals sitting around. These individuals function like transmission centers. Consequently, the body remains alive. But if any error occurs in the procedure, the body gets ready to die. Until then it remains totally unaware.

So a body can be kept alive if other people supply energy to it. This was the incredible technique used in order to keep Shankara alive for six months. For six months a group of individuals was diligently engaged in it. Taking turns, it was required that seven people always remain actively involved in the process. Finally, Shankara returned after six months and answered Bharati's questions. This is how he came to learn about something he had no knowledge of.

There was yet another way of learning about sex, but Shankara was not aware of it. Had such an event occurred in Mahavira's life, he would not have entered into another body. Instead, he would have entered into the memory of his past lives; that was yet another source available. This technique of remembering past lives, however, remained limited only to the Jainas and the Buddhists—it never reached the Hindus.

Had such a question been raised to Mahavira, he would not have bothered to enter another body—there was no need. Rather he would have revived the memories of his relations with women in his previous lives, and known through this method. He would not have needed six months. But Shankara didn't have the scientific knowledge of this technique. He knew the science of entering into the other body, which was developed by a different group of seekers.

There are many spiritual sciences and so far, no religion possesses all the details of all these

sciences. A certain religion developed a particular technique and then remained satisfied with it. But up to now, no single religion has been founded which contains the treasures of all the religions. And this will not come about until we have stopped seeing other religions with enmity. If these religions could come close to each other as friends and share each other's treasures, become partners, a new science may evolve that makes use of an infinite number of sources.

What was developed in Egypt is unknown in India. Those who built the pyramids knew something which no one in India knows. Those who worked in the monasteries of Tibet possessed something which is not found in India. What India has known is unknown in Tibet. What is known by one is not known by the other, and the problem is that each looks upon its respective fragment as complete.

Now going back into past lives is a very simple experiment; entering another body is very difficult, and very dangerous. The experiment in regression is very easy and it involves no danger. But Shankara had no knowledge of this technique. Since he spent all his life challenging and debating the Jainas and the Buddhists, all the doors of Jainism and Buddhism were closed to him. He could not gain anything from them because he could not establish any contact with them. It was a process of continuous confrontation. Naturally, some doors were closed to Shankara. Shankara was not ready to receive sun rays coming from any other direction except through his own door.

Although we don't realize it, the fact is no matter through which door the rays may enter, they come from the same sun. But here we are, sitting by our respective doors, putting our claim

on it. We fail to recognize that what an Arab does wrapped up in a woolen blanket under the sun is the same thing a Tibetan does naked in the falling snow. Their work is identical—there is no difference at all. Although they are engaged in contrary experiments, essentially both are involved in the same kind of work: the principles are the same.

What is the difference between entering another body and psychic mediumship? How does one enter into a medium?

Actually, the experiments are contrary to each other. In the former case, a person enters into another person's body, while in the case of mediumship, the medium allows a person to enter his body. These are two different things. The technique of leaving one's body and entering into another can be called the male technique; one has to enter another body. Mediumship is a female technique. Here, the medium will simply remain receptive and invite someone to enter his body. This is much simpler, and the souls invited by the medium will in most cases, be bodiless. Rarely will an embodied soul ever respond to a medium's invitation. The disembodied souls which are moving around us . . .

We are not the only ones sitting here; there are others present here as well. Since they are bodiless, their presence makes little difference to us. Their presence can be understood in terms of how the radio works. If you turn on a radio, you can catch the Delhi station. But when the radio was not turned on, do you think the Delhi station

was not transmitting? Or that the sound waves were not passing through here? They were, but we were not aware of them. There was no medium to connect us with the sound waves. The radio functions as a medium. It puts us in touch with the sound waves.

So the individuals who work as mediums function on the same principle as a radio does. They perform the act of tuning. Their presence makes it possible for any of the wandering souls to enter them. But these are all bodiless souls, and these souls are always eager to enter a body.

There are reasons for it. The biggest reason is that bodiless souls—we can call them ghosts—their desires, their passions are the same as those of any ordinary mortal, any embodied soul. However without being in the body, without the help of the body, the desires of these bodiless souls are never satisfied—they can't be.

For example, a ghost wants to make love to someone; for that, it needs a body. The ghost carries the desire, but is helpless without the body. When it comes closer to a human body, the ghost passes through it. Our body offers no resistance to it. The spirit wants to be in the body, it longs to enter a body.

The spirit succeeds in entering the body when out of fear a person contracts from within. In a state of fear your consciousness does not cover as much space—you shrink. A vacuum is created in your body. In that fearful state the spirit enters the vacuum. Generally, people think ghosts are born out of fear, or that fear itself is the ghost. None of these beliefs is true. A ghost has its own existence. A person in a state of fear makes it possible for the ghost to manifest—he becomes the medium. And since it is the ghost

that enters into his body, problems are bound to arise.

The mediumship you are talking about is the consequence of a voluntary invitation given to a soul. Someone on his own creates a space within and invites a spirit to enter. The sole technique of mediumship is that you create a space within and invite a spirit present in the vicinity to enter your body. Since this is done voluntarily, there is not much risk involved in it. And, since it is done purposely, one knows the method of calling the spirit as well as the device for sending it back. Nevertheless all of this is possible only if the medium is receptive, and it works only on the ordinary bodiless souls.

The risk increases if a soul that is already in the body is to be called, because if I were to call an embodied soul to enter a medium, the body of the man being called will fall unconscious. Very often, when someone falls unconscious, it is taken as an ordinary state of unconsciousness. But many times it is not the case—it is a situation where the individual's soul has been called somewhere. Hence it is highly risky to treat the individual at that time—it is best to leave his body alone. But we have no knowledge of all this.

Up to now, it has not become clear to science when a state of unconsciousness is of the normal kind, and when it is caused by the soul's moving out of the body. So the phenomenon is the same but of a different nature. In the case of mediumship the soul is invited in the body, in another, the soul is moved out of the body.

In order to keep his body alive, Ramakrishna had to rely on the craving for food. Is it not possible for a high level body to exist without any such craving? In which body does such assistance become necessary? If the bodies are of the higher states—such as the fifth, sixth, or the seventh body—would they be required to be maintained with the aid of any such craving as well?

Ramakrishna was very fond of food—excessively. One might say he was crazy after food. Even in the middle of a profound religious discussion he would walk to the kitchen and ask his wife Sharada what she was cooking for dinner. Then he would come back and resume the discussion. This caused aggravation not only to Sharada, but to his close devotees as well. The devotees were concerned that if word got around of their Master's weakness for food, it would create a scandal.

Actually, disciples are always greatly worried about their Master! They are always very nervous lest their Master's name be dragged into disgrace. So finally they said to Ramakrishna, "Your all of a sudden dropping a serious discussion for the sake of food does not look good upon you. And, why should the food matter so much for a man of your stature?" What Ramakrishna said in response was very remarkable.

Ramakrishna said, "Perhaps you don't know. How could you? All the anchors of my ship are lifted, all the pilings have been uprooted, the sails of my ship are filled with the wind and I am ready to depart. One anchor I have carefully

saved so that my ship does not leave the shore yet. The day I stop taking interest in food, know that I shall die three days later. I don't need to live for myself—there is no reason for it. But I have something to tell you, something to convey to you. There is something I have which I am eager to give to you. Hence it is necessary that I linger a little longer.

“My ship is ready to sail, but it contains a treasure which I would love to distribute to those who are on the shore. But the people on the shore are all asleep. I have to wake them up, I have to coax them to accept the treasure I possess. They don't realize it is a treasure, they think it is trash. They say, ‘We don't know what you are talking about—leave us alone. We are happy sleeping in our cozy beds.’

“Let me persuade the people on the shore to accept the treasure my ship is filled with. Let me distribute to them everything I have got. The time has come for me to say goodbye.

“So this is the reason why I have tied myself to one anchor; this is why I take so much interest in food. Food is my anchor. The day I turn my face away from food, know that I shall be dead three days thereafter.”

No one took him seriously that day—which is normally how things happen. The world would have benefited greatly had certain things in the lives of Ramakrishna, Buddha, or Mahavira been taken seriously. But that never happened. So it was thought perhaps Ramakrishna was providing an explanation, that he was merely trying to make a point. The devotees must have suspected also that maybe Ramakrishna was explaining away his weakness for food so that he doesn't have to be bothered.

But exactly what he had said happened. One day, Sharada brought his meal as usual. In his room Ramakrishna was lying down on his bed. He looked at the plate and turned on his side. Ordinarily, he would jump out of his bed to see what was in the plate. The moment he turned on his side, Sharada recalled Ramakrishna's words: his turning away from food would mean he won't be alive three days after that. The plate fell from her hands. She broke down and wept. Consoling Sharada, Ramakrishna said, "What will crying do? I have pulled up the anchor. How long could I have remained tied to it?" Exactly three days later he died.

You ask me: "Can such a soul stay on this earth without the aid of any desire?" Up to the fifth body, some earthly desire, an anchor, is needed; otherwise the soul can't stay around. One who has attained to the fifth body has to fasten himself around some craving related to one of the five senses.

But beyond the fifth body this is not necessary—the soul can stay around without needing to do this. However, in that case, some other factors will contribute in extending the soul's existence. Then it won't be necessary to preserve any craving. But this is altogether a different matter and requires a lengthy discussion. Let me explain it to you briefly.

If one wants to continue to exist beyond the fifth body—as Mahavira, Buddha, or Krishna have done—then in that case a pressure from the liberated souls, from the free spirits works upon them. The urge, the persuasion comes from above. Theosophy did a very significant research in this area. The theosophists discovered that many souls which are now liberated, which have

become one with the universe, which have attained to the highest, their pressure works in keeping such individuals a little longer on the earth.

For example, a ship is about to leave. It is not tied to any piling, but the people from the other shore call out loudly, "Please stay a little longer; please don't be in a hurry." These voices from the other shore can become instrumental in preventing the ship from leaving. And, these voices did prove effective in the time of Mahavira, Buddha, and Krishna.

By Ramakrishna's time the conditions had changed considerably, and things became very difficult. In fact such an enormous, unimaginable gap exists between the people who have reached the other shore and this century that it is almost impossible to hear their voices. The distance has grown wider and wider—there is no continuity, no link left anymore.

For example, Mahavira's life is part of a continuity. Twenty-three *tirthankaras* preceded Mahavira, and he was the twenty-fourth of that tradition, that system. There is a chain of twenty-three individuals before him, and the twenty-third person preceded Mahavira not long before—he lived two hundred and fifty years before him. Although the first man of the chain happened very long ago, all the twenty-three in between appeared very close to each other.

The man who reached the other shore before Mahavira . . . The meaning of the word *tirthankara* may surprise you. *Tirtha* means a *ghat*, the quay, and *tirthankara* means one who has landed on that *ghat* before—that's all. So twenty-three *tirthankaras* have landed on the other shore, the *ghat*. They constituted a system-

atic order. The language, the signs and symbols, the information pertaining to that world were all well preserved. The twenty-fourth man, standing on this shore, could easily hear, understand, pick up messages coming from these twenty-three beings.

There is not one person among the Jainas today who can follow a single word of this tradition. Mahavira died 2500 years ago. A huge gap exists between him and us. Even if Mahavira were to shout from there, there is no one here who can understand his language. In 2500 years, the entire system of language, the signs and codes pertaining to that world have changed—they have lost the continuity.

Jaina monks simply wade through the scriptures—they don't know what else they can do. But they make a big thing about the 2500th birth anniversary of Mahavira—they make a great deal of noise, display banners, raise flags, cry out loud slogans of "Hail Mahavira!" They no longer have any mechanism to receive Mahavira's communication—there is not a single man who can receive it. People other than Jainas may have such a system still, but the Jainas don't have it.

Hindus and Buddhists had a similar system too, but by Ramakrishna's time no such mechanism was available. Ramakrishna did not have any link, any connection with the people of the other shore. Hence there was no way he could be persuaded by them. So the only course left for him was to drive a piling here on this shore and hold on to it. There was no other way. It was difficult to know of any pressure working from the other side.

Two kinds of people in this world have worked for spirituality. There are some who have

worked in a chain, and the chain remained active for thousands of years. The twenty-fourth man in the Buddhist tradition is yet to be born. One more incarnation of Buddha is yet to appear. Buddhist monks all over the world are awaiting his appearance. They are looking forward expectantly—desiring him in infinite ways, hoping to find him once more. The Jainas are awaiting no one. Hindus are also expecting an incarnation—Kalki. He is yet to descend. But they don't have a clear picture yet as to how he can be called, how he can be received and recognized. They don't have any means to identify him.

You will be amazed to know that all the twenty-three Jaina *tirthankaras* had left clues to identify the twenty-fourth *tirthankara*. All possible indications were made available. They had defined all the characteristics: the lines on his palms, the signs on the soles of his feet, how his eyes would look, what sign he will have on the side of his heart, how tall he will be, how long he will live—everything was determined. There was no problem identifying such a man.

In Mahavira's time eight individuals, including Mahavira, claimed to be the twenty-fourth *tirthankara*. The time was ripe for a *tirthankara* to appear, but there were eight claimants. Finally, Mahavira was accepted and the other seven were discarded, because only Mahavira showed all the signs of being a *tirthankara*.

But no such system or means of identification was available by the time Ramakrishna appeared on the scene. In a spiritual sense, the world today is in a very confused state. And in this confusing situation now there is no alternative left except that one remains tethered to

the earth by anchoring himself to some piling. No messages are heard from the other shore; even if they are heard, no one follows them. Even when one does follow their transmissions, it becomes difficult to decode their secret. The basic difficulty is that now, only by way of signs and signals is communication possible between that world and this world.

You may not be aware, but within the last hundred years scientists have discovered that there must be at least fifty thousand planets in the universe on which there may be life. And they suspect there may be beings on these planets with a consciousness developed as high as that of human beings—or even higher. But the most difficult thing is: how to establish a dialogue with them? How to send them signals? What sign or symbol will they understand? How will they follow them? Seeing the tricolor flag of India, an Indian knows it is his national flag. But what significance will the flag have for people of other planets? And how can we make it fly so that it becomes visible to them? Many strange experiments have already been carried out in this respect.

One man created a gigantic triangle in Siberia. He grew yellow flowers on that triangle which was miles long. Then he illuminated the triangle with special light effects. Now, no matter on which planet you may draw a triangle, it will still be a triangle. No matter where you may draw, it will still have three angles. Wherever there is a human being, or beings higher than man—whatever—the figures of geometry will remain the same.

So the idea was to establish a contact with other planetary beings by means of geometry. It

was hoped, firstly, that people looking at such a huge triangle from another planet may come to think that such a triangle could not have come into existence on its own. And, secondly, seeing the triangle they might safely assume that geometry must be known to the people on earth.

For many days a great deal of work was done under this assumption, but there was no confirmation whether or not anyone on the other planets understood this attempt. Now of course, radar has been set up to receive signals which perhaps the other planets may be sending us. Occasionally some signals are caught, but their secret, their meaning remains obscure.

For example, you must have heard of the flying saucer. Many people have seen a small luminous saucerlike object moving around and then disappearing in the sky. It has been seen at many places, on many occasions, and sometimes at many locations around the world on the same night. And yet, so far, it has remained a mystery. No one knows what that object is. Who sends it? Why does it appear and then disappear?

It is quite possible that beings of some planet are trying to establish contact with earth. They may be sending us signals which we are unable to follow. When we don't understand them, some of us say it's all a fiction. They think the talk of flying saucers, et cetera is nothing more than gossip. Some believe it must be an optical illusion; while others think it could not be anything but some kind of natural phenomenon. So it is not clear exactly what it is. There are a few people in this world who at least believe that maybe through these objects people of another planet are sending an invitation to us, that they are trying to convey something to us.

But even this is not such a difficult situation, because the distance between life on this planet and life on another planet is not so great as it is between souls which have reached the other world and souls which still exist in this world. This distance is much greater. In the first place, the signals transmitted from that world are difficult to catch here. Even if they are caught, they are not understood. Their secrets remain undiscovered.

So people like Ramakrishna in this century, or say within the last two hundred years—it is not right to say even two hundred years . . . Actually after Mohammed—that is in the last fourteen hundred years—things became difficult, very difficult indeed. Realizing the situation, Nanak created a new set-up from the start. He forgot about the past, and started a new tradition of ten people. But it too disappeared very soon—didn't last long.

So now there are only individual seekers left—those who are not part of any chain. An individual seeker has to use an anchor as a means—that's the only way at least up to the fifth body. The external signals and pressures can work when one is beyond the fifth body. But for now, if the messages from the other world are not coming in, even a man in the seventh body too will have to make use of the anchor established before the stage of the fifth body—there is no other way.

I AM READY, IF YOU ARE

**Bombay
Evening of August 5, 1970**

At the Dwarka Meditation Camp you have discussed the process of entering into the memories of past lives. You said then that by disconnecting the consciousness completely from the future, the power of meditation should be focused toward the past. Explaining the process further, you said that first, one regresses to the age of five, then to the age of three, followed by the memory of birth, the point of conception, and finally into the memories of past life. You said additionally that you did not intend to explain the whole sutra, the whole technique for remembering past lives. What is the whole technique? Would you kindly explain the sutra further.

Memories of our past life have been prevented by nature. There is a reason for it. It is necessary that in the overall system of one's life one forgets most of the things that happen to him

every day. That's why we don't remember all the memories that we create during our lifetime. However, that which you don't remember is not completely erased from your mind. Only the connection between your consciousness and the memory is severed.

For example, if a person lives for fifty years, billions of memories will be formed in his mind. If he were to remember them all, he would go mad. So he remembers whatever is meaningful; whatsoever is worthless he slowly forgets. But your forgetting does not mean the memory is completely wiped out. It merely slips out of your center of consciousness and is stored in some corner of your mind.

Buddha has given a very significant name to this storehouse. He calls it *alaya vjgyan*—the storehouse of consciousness. It is just like having an attic or a basement where all the unwanted things are stored. Even though the objects are out of your sight, they still remain present within the house. Similarly, your memories go out of sight, but remain accumulated in some corners of your mind.

It would become difficult to live if you were to recall all the memories of even this life. In order that the mind stays free to handle the events of the future, the past has to be forgotten. Since you forget what happened yesterday, you become capable of living the tomorrow. This way the mind goes on becoming empty; it is able to look ahead. In order to look ahead, it is necessary to forget the past. Without forgetting what has already occurred, you won't have the capability to see what is ahead of you.

Every day a part of your mind must become blank so that it can receive new impressions.

otherwise how can it work? As the future arrives, the past disappears every day. And as soon as this future becomes the past, it disappears too so that we are free to receive what lies ahead. This is how the mind functions.

We cannot carry the full memory of even one life. You won't be able to recall anything if I ask you what you did on January 1, 1960. You did exist on January 1, 1960, and you must have done something from dawn till dusk, yet you will be unable to remember anything. A small technique of hypnosis can revive the memory of that day. If you were hypnotized, and a part of your consciousness is put to sleep, and then if you were asked to describe what you did on January 1, 1960, you will recount everything.

For a long time I experimented on a young man. But my problem was how to be sure of the details he gave of January 1, 1960. He was able to narrate that day only under hypnosis; in the waking state he would forget everything. So it was difficult for me to determine whether or not he really took a bath at nine o'clock on the morning of January 1, 1960. There was only one way to do it. I wrote down everything he did on a certain day. After a few months when I asked him to describe his activities of the same day, he couldn't recall anything.

When I put him under a deep state of hypnosis and asked him to narrate the particular day, he not only recounted all that I had noted down, but described many other things which had not been written. He did not miss anything from what I had written down; rather he added many more things. Obviously I could not have noted everything. I had written only what I saw, or what had occurred to me.

In hypnosis you can be taken as deeply inside your self as one would like to go. But it will be done by someone else—you will be unconscious. You won't know a thing. Under hypnosis you can be taken even into your past lives, but it would essentially be in a state of unconsciousness.

The only difference between *jati-smaran* regression and the technique of hypnosis is that while regressing you go into your past lives with consciousness; in hypnosis you are taken into your previous lives by being made unconscious. The validity increases a great deal if both the techniques are applied. Suppose you hypnotize a man, ask him about his previous lives and write it down. Then in his conscious state you lead him into meditation. If even under the meditative state he gives the same account of his previous lives, you gather additional evidence and the validity of the story is established.

So the same memory can be revived by applying two methods. Although the process of regression is simple, it has its own hazards. That's why I did not explain all the keys. All the keys can be told only to an individual who is ready to experiment. Otherwise, ordinarily, they cannot be explained to everyone. The whole technique can of course be explained saving one *sutra*—this one cannot be practiced.

As I said yesterday, our consciousness moves with the aid of will, determination. For example, when you sit for meditation and begin to go deep into it, make a resolve to go back when you were five years old and find out what happened to you then. In that deep state of meditation you will suddenly find you have indeed

become five years old, and whatever happened to you at that age is coming back to you.

At first, enter into the memory of this birth. As one gains clarity and depth in meditation, and as it becomes possible to go back into the past—which is not difficult—one can go as far back as the mother's womb and revive memories of that time. If your mother fell down when she was pregnant with you, her memory of that fall, that hurt, will become part of your memory too. Or, if she was unhappy at the time you were in her womb, her memory of that suffering will be your memory as well. Because in the mother's womb the states of your being and hers were not separate—they were combined. Hence, deep down the experience that your mother had becomes your experience too—it is automatically transferred to you.

During pregnancy, the mother's state of mind plays a vital role in the formation of the child. In the right sense of the meaning, one is not a mother just because she has carried a child in her womb; she is also a mother because she has given a special direction to the child's consciousness. Even a female animal is able to carry a baby in her stomach—all animals do it. Sooner or later machines will do it as well. It is not too difficult to imagine babies growing in a machine.

An artificial womb can certainly be created. The same system that exists in the mother's womb can be created in a machine run by electricity. A system with the same degree of heat, the same amount of water, can be produced. And sooner or later instead of growing babies in a mother's womb, they will be placed and grown in a mechanical womb. But that will not be enough to meet the requirement of motherhood.

Perhaps very few mothers on this earth have fulfilled the role of motherhood. It's a Herculean task to be a mother. And the task is, for nine months giving the child's consciousness a special direction. During these nine months if the mother stays angry . . . And when she gives birth to an angry child, when he behaves angrily, she scolds him, rebukes him, and wonders who has spoiled him, what bad company he must have fallen into.

Mothers come to me complaining about their sons and daughters having fallen into bad company. But they don't realize that they are the ones who have sown the seeds of their children's wrongdoings. They alone are responsible for building their consciousness—children are simply manifesting it. Of course, sowing the seed and its manifestation are two different phenomena. We don't see the connection between the two because an enormous gap exists in between.

Emile Coué has written an anecdote in his biography. He says a friend of his, a major in the army, was once reading a book on hypnosis. Somewhere in the book it was mentioned that when a child is in the womb, whatever impressions the mother may receive are automatically transferred to the child. His wife was pregnant at that time. He told her, "The author of this book says, 'Whatsoever a mother thinks, whatever she feels, whatever she lives—all of that is directly transferred to the child.'" They both laughed and took no serious note of it.

That evening, they were invited to a party in honor of a general. By coincidence, the major's wife sat next to the general at the dining table. The general's thumb was squashed during the war. The major's wife suddenly remembered

what her husband had read to her that afternoon. Afraid that her child may be born with a deformed thumb, she tried deliberately not to see the general's thumb. Throughout the party she avoided the general's thumb, but the more she tried not to look at it the more her eyes wandered toward that thumb.

She forgot the general, she forgot the party. her whole attention remained focused on the thumb. Since she was sitting next to the general, she saw the thumb as he ate, as he shook hands with people. It got so bad that she even shut her eyes. But by shutting her eyes, she saw the thumb even more clearly. It is easier to see things clearly with closed eyes. She completely freaked out. As long as the party lasted, the poor woman remained totally obsessed with the general's thumb.

At night, she woke up with a start several times. In the morning she said to her husband, "I am in trouble. I am very much afraid my child will be born with a deformed thumb."

Consoling her, the husband said, "Are you crazy? What's in a book? Do you believe something will happen just because it was written by somebody? Drop the whole thing from your mind!" But the wife couldn't drop it.

The fact is, the very thing we are asked to drop becomes difficult to let go of. The more the husband tried to persuade her to drop the thing and forget about it, the more it became crystalized. You know very well—that which you want to forget, you never can. In fact in the very attempt of forgetting you have to keep remembering it—just to forget it. It keeps coming back to your mind. If you really want to forget something, you will at least have to remember it. And

in order to forget, the more you will need to remember it, the stronger that memory becomes.

As the days passed and the time of the child's birth drew closer, the thumb began to weigh heavily on her mind. No matter how much she tried, she couldn't forget it. As she went through labor pains, as the child was taking birth, the thumb was in her thoughts—not the child. And an incredible thing happened: the child was born with a deformed thumb. When the photographs of the child's and the general's thumbs were compared, they looked identical. It was the mother who gave this thumb to the child. Like this, all mothers give their own thumbs, their own disorders to their children. Everyone has different kinds of thumbs, disorders which have been given to them.

So first, you will have to go back in your memory to the day you were born—but that is not your real birthday. The actual birthday is the day a child is conceived. What we call the birthday is, in fact, the day which falls nine months after the birth has happened—it is not the right birthday.

The day the soul enters the mother's womb is indeed the correct birthday. It is neither difficult nor dangerous to go back in memory this far, because it pertains to this very life. And in order to do that, as I mentioned earlier, you need to turn the mind away from the future. Those who practice even a little bit of meditation will have no difficulty forgetting about the future. And what is there to remember in the future anyway? In fact, there is no future.

So the direction has to be changed. Instead of looking at the future, look in the past, and go on

making your resolve stronger and stronger in your mind. Turn one year back, two years back, ten, twenty years back; keep moving backward and you will have a strange experience.

Ordinarily, if we go back into our past without meditation, even in a conscious state, the further we go back, the hazier the memories will become. Someone may find it impossible to recall anything beyond the age of five. And even up to five the memories may be few and far between. As you draw closer and closer to your present age, your memories will become more and more clear. You will have a clear memory of yesterday; your memory of today will be even more clear. But your memory of the day before yesterday, that of a year back, or that of twenty-five or fifty years back will be increasingly hazy and hazier.

But if you apply the same technique in the state of meditation, you will be greatly surprised. The situation will be totally the reverse. As you will draw closer to the childhood memories, the clearer they will be. Because the mind's slate is never so clear as it is during the childhood; the writing on it is never so clear after that.

So you will have a big surprise reviving memories in meditation, because the situation will be reversed. The more you will move backward, drawing closer to childhood, the more transparent will be the memory. And as you will grow older in your memory, the more hazy everything will look. In meditation, today will look the foggiest, while the first day of birth, fifty years ago for example, will be the clearest day in memory. Returning to the past memories in meditation is not remembering. You must understand the difference.

When we remember consciously, we are remembering. How is this different? When you remember your childhood—and you are now fifty years old, for example—you are fifty now, at this moment, and you revive the memory when you were five years old, or two years old, or one year old, what happens? Your fifty-year-old mind stands in between this moment and the memory of those years. The memories become hazy because you are looking through the layers of fifty years spread in between.

When you remember the past following the technique of meditation, you no longer remain fifty years old; you become five years old. In meditation you remember as a five-year-old child. At that moment you are not a fifty-year-old man remembering the days when you were five years old. You go back to the fifth year of your life.

So when we recall memories consciously we should call it remembering, whereas the same in meditation is re-living. And there is a difference between the two. In remembering you face great layers of memories which make everything fuzzy. In meditation, re-living the memory turns you into a five-year-old.

Shobhana is here with us. She says in meditation, all of a sudden strange thoughts start coming to her. She thinks she is a child playing with dolls. That thought becomes so strong that it frightens her. She suspects someone may see her in that condition and feel strange about her, so she opens her eyes now and then to make sure no one is watching her.

She is not aware, at that moment her present age disappears. In that state she is not even

remembering her childhood; it is re-living. That means in meditation she turns into a five-year-old girl.

There is a young man. In meditation he begins to suck his thumb—he becomes six months old. The moment he enters into meditation, his thumb goes right in his mouth. He returns to the age when he was six months old.

It is necessary to understand the difference between remembering and re-living. It is not very difficult to re-live one life. The only problem is we have become identified with our age. A man of fifty is not willing to step back even five years—he wants to remain stuck at the age of fifty. Those who wish to re-live their past, who want to remember their past will have to give up their fixed identities; they will have to relax a little.

For example, if a man wants to go back to his childhood it would do him good if he played with children for an hour or so every day. It would help him greatly if he dropped his fixation on being fifty years old, if he stopped being serious for a while. It would be good if he did jogging, swimming, dancing. It would be helpful if he consciously lived like a child for an hour; that would make it easier for him to return to his past in meditation as well. Otherwise he remains rigidly at the age of fifty.

Remember, consciousness has no age: it only consists of conditionings. There is nothing like a five-year-old, a ten-year-old, or a fifty-year-old consciousness. It is just an idea. Close your eyes and try to find how old your consciousness is—you won't be able to say anything. You might say, "I will have to check the diary, or look into a calendar, or consult the horoscope."

The fact is, no one knew what his age was until horoscopes, calendars, the counting of years, the numbers came into existence. Even today there are aboriginals who find it difficult to answer if you ask them how old they are. Because for some of them the numerals stop at fifteen, for others at ten, and for some the number doesn't go beyond five.

I know a man who is a house-cleaner. Once someone asked him how old he was. He replied, "Just about twenty-five." In fact he was at least about sixty.

The people who heard him were a little surprised. They asked, "How old is your son?"

He said, "Maybe about twenty-five."

The people were puzzled. They said, "Your son is twenty-five, you are also twenty-five years old—how can this be?" He had no problem with it, because for him twenty-five was the last number, there was no number beyond that. The difficulty arises for us because we have numbers beyond twenty-five. For him, beyond twenty-five was the infinite, the numberless.

Age exists because of our calculations based on calendars, dates, days. Age is a by-product of all these. If you look within there is no age. You won't know how old I am by looking inside me, because age is purely an external measure. But this outer measurement becomes fixed on the inner consciousness—it sticks there like a nail.

You go on driving nails in your consciousness, saying, "Now I am fifty, now I am fifty-one, now I am fifty-two . . ." If these nails become too much set, it will be difficult to go back into the memories. One who is very serious cannot return to his childhood memories.

The serious people are sick people. Actually, seriousness is a psychological disease. Those who are very serious always suffer from illness. It's very difficult for them to regress. Those who are simple and light-hearted, who can play and laugh with children, for them it will be easy to go back into the past memories.

So try to break the fixations of your external life. Don't be conscious of your age all the time. Never say to your son, "I know, because my age is such and such." Age has nothing to do with knowing. Don't behave with children as if there exists a gap of fifty years between you and them. Instead, be a friend to them.

A seventy-year-old woman has written a book. It's a small book containing the story of her experiment of befriending a five-year-old child. It's a difficult thing to do, not a simple matter. It is easy to be a father, a mother, a brother, a guru of a five-year-old child; to be a friend is very difficult. No mother, no father is ever able to be friends with their children.

We will have transformed the entire world the day parents become friends of their children. It will be altogether a different world, it will no longer be so hideous and ugly. But they don't extend that hand of friendship. So this woman of seventy really carried out an amazing experiment. She befriended the child when he was three. For the next two years she maintained her friendship with him in every possible way. It would be good to understand her attitude toward this friendship. It will be easy for such a woman to return to her past memories.

This woman of seventy would go to the seashore with that child who happens to be her friend. The child would run, pick up stones and

pebbles, and the woman would do the same. How else could she have broken the tremendous age barrier between her and the child? Her picking up the stones and pebbles along with the child was not just to advance her friendship with him. She really tried to see the stones and pebbles with the same joy and delight as the child.

She would look into the child's eyes, and watch her own eyes too. She would look at his hands picking up a shining pebble, and she would look at her own hands doing the same act. She would watch how thrilled the child was, how he was looking at those pebbles with such wonder and excitement in his eyes. She tried to look the same way—becoming a child too.

She ran with him to catch the foam as the waves lapped against the shore. The child would run after butterflies, and she would run with him too. The child once came up to her in the middle of the night and said, "Let's go out. The crickets chirping sound so beautiful." She did not say, "Go to sleep now. This is no time to go out." She immediately went along with him. The child walked, step by step, softly so as not to disturb the crickets. The woman followed him exactly the same way.

Two years of this friendship brought exceptional results. The woman writes, "I forgot I was seventy years old. What I did not know at the age of five, I came to know at the age of seventy by becoming a five-year-old child. The whole world turned into a wonderland, a fairyland for me. I indeed ran, picked up rocks, chased butterflies. All the differences of age between the child and me disappeared. He talked to me as he would talk to any other child. I also talked to him the same way a child talks to another child."

She has recounted all her experiences of these two years in a book called *The Sense of Wonder*. She says with great conviction that she once again found a sense of wonder, that even the greatest of all saints could never have achieved more than what she did.

When Jesus was asked what kind of people will enter his kingdom of heaven, he replied, "Those who are like children." Perhaps children do live in a kind of big heaven. We take their heaven away by schooling and tutoring them. But it is necessary that the paradise be taken away, because when it is found again the feeling is rare.

Very few people are able to regain this paradise, however. People generally live in the state of "paradise lost"; the situation of "paradise regained" comes in the lives of very few. We all lose our paradise, of course, but we never find it again. If one can become again like a child before his death, the paradise returns to him. If an old man can see the world with a child's eye, the kind of peace, the kind of joy and bliss that will shower upon him is beyond comprehension.

So those who wish to return to their past memories will have to break their fixation with age. Once in a while hold a child's hand and run along with him forgetting how old you are. And the funny thing is, that age exists just as a thought, a memory. It's merely an idea which has taken hold of us very strongly.

Break your fixation with age in living the outer life; and in your inner life, when you sit in meditation, move back year by year. Let each birthday come alive one by one; go back slowly. Then it would not be difficult to reach to the

point of your birth. The same technique works in returning to the past lives. However, I can't tell you the *sutra* for moving from one life to another. There is a reason for it: if one experiments with it just out of curiosity, he can go mad. Because in doing so, if the memories of the past life come crashing down unexpectedly, it will be difficult to bear them.

Once a girl was brought to me. When I saw her, she was eleven years old. For no specific reason, she had a memory of her three past lives. This was purely accidental—just an error on the part of nature.

Nature makes a great arrangement. It buries the layer of your past lives' memories, and the layer of this life's memory starts building over it. Deep down, this layer keeps you disconnected from your previous birth. Some countries—such as Mohammedan or Christian countries—do not believe in reincarnation. In such countries children are not born with the memory of any past life because the people in those countries are not attuned to that direction. It is like we firmly believe there is nothing on the other side of this wall; by and by we'll stop looking beyond it.

In India no matter how much disagreement the Jainas, the Buddhists, the Hindus may have among themselves, they agree on one point—the existence of past lives. There is no conflict in their belief in reincarnation. Therefore, for thousands of years the mind of this country has been filled with the belief in the possible existence of past lives.

Often it unexpectedly happens that if a man dies with a deep feeling to remember that life in the next one, then without his going through any

yogic practice or following any meditation technique, he will be able to retain the memory in his next birth. But that will put him in trouble.

So when the girl was brought to me, she remembered three of her past lives. Her first birth happened in Assam, where she had died as a seven-year-old girl. Presently, she could speak as much of the Assamese language as a seven-year-old girl can. She could perform as much Assamese dance as a seven-year-old girl can. But in her current life she was born in Madhya Pradesh. She had never been to Assam; she had nothing to do with the Assamese language.

Her second birth happened in Madhya Pradesh too, in Katni. And there she had died at the age of about sixty. So that adds up to sixty-seven, plus eleven years of this birth. When I saw that eleven-year-old girl her eyes, her face looked like that of a seventy-eight-year-old woman. Even at the age of eleven she looked so jaundiced and pale, so worried and troubled, as if she was close to death, because she carried within her an awareness of the sequence of memories spread over seventy-eight years. She was in great trouble.

The relatives of her past life were my neighbors in Jabalpur; they brought her to me. The girl had recognized all the relatives of her past life from a crowd of thousands. In that crowd she spotted people from her previous life: her son, daughter-in-law, grandson, and so on—she recognized all of them.

The house where she lived in her previous life was situated in a village. Her relatives in that life had now moved to Jabalpur. She told them of a treasure buried in the old house—it was indeed found there. In her past life she was the elder sis-

ter of my next door neighbor. The man has a scar on his head. The moment this girl recognized him, the first thing she said was, "Good Lord! The scar is still on your head!"

The man asked with a surprise, "Can you tell me, when did I get this injury? I certainly don't remember."

The girl said, "On the day of your wedding you fell from the marriage horse—the horse reared and you fell down." The man was about eight or nine years old at the time of his marriage; he couldn't recall. So enquiries were made in the old village to find out if anyone remembered this incident. Finally, an old woman of the village corroborated the story, although the man himself had no memory of it.

I advised the girl's father to do something for her to forget those memories. I asked him to bring the girl to me so that I could help her forget in a week's time. Otherwise, I said, the girl will be in a lot of trouble. Already she was facing great difficulties. She couldn't go to school. How can you enroll a seventy-eight-year-old woman in a school? She couldn't learn anything—she already knew too much! She couldn't play. There was nothing like a childhood for her. How can a seventy-eight-year-old woman play? She looked serious. She was always nit-picking everyone in the house. At this age, she was filled with as much bitchiness as a seventy-eight-year-old man or woman is.

So, I said, unless that girl was made to forget the past memories, she would go mad. But the members of her family were enjoying the way she was. A whole crowd would gather to see her. People even began offering her coins, coconut, fruits and sweets. The president of India invited

her to Delhi. An invitation came to bring her to America as well. Her family was very happy with all this. They stopped bringing her to me. They said, "We don't want to help her forget the memories—it's a good thing."

Seven years have gone by since I saw her last. Today the girl is mad. So they came and asked for my help. I told them, "Now it is a difficult situation. You did not agree when it was possible to do something about it." The girl is totally out of her senses. She is in a confused state. She can't figure out which memory belongs to which birth. She is not sure whether this brother, or this father is from her present life or her past life—everything is mixed up.

Nature's arrangement is such that it allows you to carry only as much memory as you can bear. That's why it is necessary to go through a special discipline before reviving the memories of past lives. It makes you so capable that nothing ever confuses you. In fact, the primary condition for going into the memories of previous lives is that one should be able to see the world as nothing more than a dream, a *leela*, a play. Until this happens, it is not right to take a person into his past life.

Once you begin to see this world as a play, a dream, then there is no problem. Then nothing will hurt you. The memories of a play are not the kind which can cause any harm. But if this world looks very real to you If you have been taking your wife to be real, and you come to remember that she was your mother in the previous life, you will be confused. You won't know whether to take her as a wife or a mother!

I once helped a woman experiment in recalling her past life. First I kept restraining her from

doing it because it was just out of curiosity. But she was very curious to know and went on insisting. Finally I consented, and she did as I explained to her. The experiment succeeded; the woman recalled that she was a prostitute in her past life. This was too much for an ethical and chaste woman like her to bear. She said, "I don't want to remember all this, I want to forget all about it." But it wasn't so easy to forget it; a lot of effort was needed. It is easy to remember a thing but very difficult to forget it. Because once a fact has become part of our knowledge, it is very difficult to erase it.

That's why I purposely left out one key in my explanation, and that is how to enter from this life into your previous life. This key can be given only to one who has revived all the memories of this birth. But then it will be strictly an individual matter. It cannot be discussed publicly, nor is it right to do so.

Our mind does innumerable things out of curiosity. Most people live by curiosity alone. They always pry into things out of curiosity, but such an attitude may sometimes prove dangerous. A particular memory may surface which cannot be restrained later on. Nevertheless, one can certainly experiment with reviving this life's memories. When that becomes an enjoyable experience, and when the entire situation of this life

. . . .

As soon as you have relived your past memories, you will find it is all nothing more than a dream. You will come to realize that whatsoever you are taking so seriously today—profit or loss in business, quarrels with the wife, a father showing his annoyance, the son leaving home, the daughter marrying an undesirable person—

all will end up tomorrow in the junkyard of your memory.

When the memories will come back to you, you will be amazed to see the things you took so seriously many times in the past exist nowhere today. You will see how some moments had taken such control over you that for a second everything seemed like a matter of life and death. Those moments have become worthless today, they are lying like a heap of dust somewhere on the road, they are like trash lying in a pile of rubbish. They are totally useless today.

So, re-living the past memories will cause two things to happen. First, it will become evident that whatsoever you had taken so seriously did not prove to be such a grave matter after all. It wasn't even important enough to remember. You will see that whatever you were ready to stake your life for doesn't even exist anywhere.

Such an understanding will transform your life, because then you will come to see that the thing you are willing to kill or be killed for will someday be rotting in a heap of garbage. Just stop for a moment or two and everything will look absurd. Wait a moment or two and all will turn into memory. And if the total outcome of life is nothing but memories, then how is an ordinary man's life different from the life an actor lives on the screen? After all, whatever an actor does, the final outcome is the creation of a film which we see on the screen. Similarly, in an overall sense whatever we do, whatever we live through is recorded onto a film of memories which can be seen again.

What we call life is not much different from focusing a camera. And the captured moments we once considered so significant are just like pictures projected on the screen. They are worth

no more than a film. The only difference being that the film we normally use can be enclosed in a box, while the film recorded in life has to be stored in the container of your memory. That's all the difference there is. And what is stored in the container of your memory is as much a film as the regular celluloid film.

Sooner or later, it won't be too difficult for science to discover a way to draw this film out and project it on the screen. It's not much of a problem, because when we close our eyes, we see the same film being projected on our optical screen. In a dream, your eyeballs move in the same way as when you watch a movie. By placing one's fingers on a sleeping person's eyes and sensing the movement or non-movement of his eyeballs, one can determine whether he is dreaming or not. The movement of his eyes will indicate he is watching something. What do you suppose he is watching? He is, of course, watching a movie.

In meditation, if one can re-live his past lives as well, he will find that experience to be no more than watching a film. The experiment of *jati-smaran*, remembering past lives, was meant for this very purpose. In fact, Mahavira or Buddha never initiated anyone until he had gone through *jati-smaran*. That's why the initiated monk of today is not really initiated nor is he a monk—he is neither. He knows nothing.

A few days ago a Jaina monk came to see me. He said, "Please teach me meditation. I am a monk from Acharya Tulsi's order. He has initiated me."

I asked him, "You have received initiation from Acharya Tulsi and have not learned meditation? Then what have you learned? What did you take the initiation for? What does initiation

mean really? If you have come to learn meditation from me, then why did you take the initiation? If not even meditation was taught to you there, then what else was taught? If Acharya Tulsi doesn't teach meditation, then what else does he do?"

To initiate means to lead someone into meditation—that's the only way initiation can happen, not otherwise. So Mahavira and Buddha gave initiation only after one had re-lived his past lives. Mahavira's teaching was that until you have re-lived your past lives, you cannot drop your serious attitude.

If a man were to remember once, "I had made love to a woman in my previous birth and had told her, 'I can't live without you even for a moment.' And the same I had done and said the life before that, and the same thing the life previous to that one. Even before I was born a human being I had repeated the same act, whether I was an animal or a bird: I have been doing and saying the same things all along." And then if he were to say all this to a woman today, he will burst out laughing. Because now he knows he can live very well without her—in fact he has been living for lives without any problem.

Someone had wanted to attain a high position in his past life and had become like an emperor. He had thought that once he attained the highest honor everything would be fine. But it was all in vain. The poor fellow died. It was the same story the life before that, and the one previous to that. And the same man is once again racing to Delhi in search of a position. If he were to remember his past lives just before reaching Delhi, he would turn back realizing the absurdity of the whole thing. He would laugh, seeing how

many times he went to Delhi, and how each time ultimately the mad scramble ended up in death.

Man wants to repeat all he has been doing in his previous lives, but he has no memory of it. If he could remember it even once, it would be impossible for him to do it again. No man can really become a sannyasin until he has realized the whole world as nothing but a dream. But how can this world look like a dream? The key to that lies in *jati-smaran*, remembering past lives.

So, go back into the memories of this birth—but not just out of curiosity. Only when you have seen this life as a dream and feel the burden lifted from your mind, and only after you have gained the capacity to see the previous lives as a dream too, can this key be given to you. However, it will be a one-to-one communication.

The techniques I am working on with you collectively are such that they can't harm you. Whatsoever I am saying publicly are things which can lead only up to a point where it is safe for you. Beyond that, the communication of *sutras* will be strictly on an individual basis. Hence with those who will progress fast, I will start sharing things which otherwise cannot be told openly in public. As soon as such people become ready, those things can be imparted to them. But that will be absolutely in person, individually. There is no point talking about them before everyone.

What are the distinguishing features that make a womb worthy enough to receive a higher soul, and what are the characteristics of a womb in which an

inferior soul may enter? What preparations are necessary in order that a higher soul may descend? How are the preparations made? As compared to ordinary wombs, how special were the wombs that carried great souls like Buddha, Mahavira, Krishna, and Jesus?

Many things will have to be considered. The first thing is: the purer the moment of love making is, the purer the soul a womb can attract. But sex has been condemned so much that the moment of copulation hardly ever becomes a divine moment. Sex has already been branded as sacrilegious. It is already rooted in our consciousness as something impure. The sexual union between husband and wife takes place in the shadows of sin; it does not transpire in a worshipful moment of prayer and bliss. Naturally, it is not possible for a pure soul to be attracted toward a womb surrounded by a cloak of sin. So in order that a higher soul may enter a womb, the first condition is that it be a divine moment of love-making.

In my view, the moment of sexual union is a moment of prayer. Only after prayer and meditation should the husband and wife enter into sex. The result will be twofold. One is that after meditation it won't be possible for them to enter into sex for years.

The first thing that will happen after meditation is that you won't be able to enter sex. As you will go into meditation, the desire for sex will disappear—meditation will become the way to celibacy. Years will go by without sex. The purity ensuing from these bygone years will not be the product of a suppressed sex. It won't be the result of any vow taken by the husband and wife—

both practicing celibacy by sleeping separately in locked rooms, or the husband sleeping in the temple all by himself.

This celibacy will not be the consequence of a vow, rather it will be a spontaneous flowering. It is simply impossible to enter sex after meditation. Meditation gives so much joy, such bliss, that why would one care for the pleasures of sex?

If husband and wife can meditate regularly for years, they won't be able to enter sex. That will have a twofold effect. One, the energy will become very dynamic and intense. A very potent sperm is needed in order to give birth to a pure soul. Weak sperms won't do. Only an intercourse which is preceded by years of celibacy can be effective in allowing a powerful soul to enter the womb. After years of meditation when someone goes into sex—that is, when meditation makes him competent to enter into sex—then naturally it will have to be a divine moment. Because if there had been even a slight impurity left in that moment, meditation would not have given the go-ahead.

When meditation gives the command—that is, when the possibility to enter sex exists even after one has been in meditation—then it means that even sex has taken on a sacredness. Now it has a divineness of its own. When two individuals copulate in this divine moment, it would be better to say the union is not physical, it is very spiritual. The bodies are meeting, yet the meeting is not physical—it is very profound and spiritual.

So giving birth to a divine soul is not merely a biological phenomenon. The meeting of two bodies simply provides an opportunity for another body to take birth; but when two souls meet as

well, a situation is created for a greater soul to descend.

The births of Mahavira or Buddha are of this kind. The birth of Jesus is even more incredible. The births of Mahavira and Buddha had been prophesied. Their coming was awaited for years. Every detail was foretold—so much so that Mahavira had even predicted in his previous life how many dreams the mother of his next life will have before his birth. The dreams were mentioned in a sequence with their contents. Mahavira's prophecy was, "When these many dreams occur, know that I have entered the womb." He also pointed out the symbols that would appear in the dream—a white elephant, a lotus, and so on. So people were waiting eagerly for a woman to declare she had seen all the dreams with these symbols.

In Buddha's case too, symbols were mentioned. When he was due to be born, a monk from the far away Himalayas arrived at the palace. He was old, and had been waiting. He was very worried lest he should die before the advent of Buddha. So when he came to beg at the palace, he told Buddha's father, "I know a child is to be born here, I have come for his *darshan*, to see him and pay my respects."

The father was very astonished to hear this. The monk was a renowned figure, very famous, a divine person in his own right. He had thousands of devotees, and he was asking to pay his regards to the child! The father was simply flabbergasted. But he felt very happy too, because his wife had already mentioned to him the special dreams she had.

So the next day the monk arrived to see the newborn child. Seeing the child, the monk broke

down and began crying bitterly. The father became very worried. He asked the monk, "Are you crying because you see a bad omen?"

The monk said, "There is no bad omen for the child. I am crying for myself. The man at whose feet I could have attained a timeless bliss, is born. But alas, I am nearing death and this child will take time to grow and flower—I cannot wait that long. The time for my departure has come."

The birth of Jesus was awaited by the whole world—especially so in the Middle East. The prediction was that at the time of Jesus' birth, four stars will appear in the sky. Those who knew the secret understood the symbolic meaning of the stars. A man from India journeyed to Bethlehem in order to offer his greetings on Jesus' birth. One man went from Egypt, and two from other countries. All four of them knew that the appearance of the four stars would herald the birth of Jesus.

So as soon as they saw the stars, they hurried in search of the child. The information was that those who recognized the stars would be guided by them to the place where the child was born. The stars kept moving ahead and the travelers followed them.

The wise man from Egypt who had set out in search of the child first came to Herod—the emperor at the time of Jesus. He said to the emperor, "Perhaps you don't know, but the king of kings has arrived at last." Herod couldn't follow what the man meant by "king of kings". He thought an enemy was born who would finish him someday, so he ordered all newly born children in Jerusalem to be killed. The news reached

Mary in time and she escaped. Jesus was born in hiding in a dark and dingy stable.

The story of Jesus' birth is even more significant than that of Buddha's or Mahavira's. It illustrates the question you have asked: "What preparations are necessary in order to give birth to a higher soul?" Jesus' soul was ready to take birth. A suitable mother was available, but not the father. Mariam was qualified to give birth to Jesus, but her husband was not. That's why it has always been said Jesus was born of a virgin mother. There is a reason for saying this, because the father was irrelevant. Jesus was indeed born of a virgin mother. A bodiless soul, which the Christians call the Holy Ghost, had to enter the body of Jesus' father. Through the medium of Jesus' father, another soul remained present in his place. That means, Jesus' father was not there, only his body was.

I have mentioned before how Shankara entered another body. Similarly, a soul entered the body of Mary's husband and Jesus was born. That's why he could say he had nothing to do with Jesus' birth. He had no knowledge of what happened. Insofar as he was concerned, Mariam was virgin; in his eyes, the son was born to a virgin Mary. He was unconscious all along. His body was simply used as a medium. But Christianity is not clear on this point. Hence the Christian priest somehow tries to prove Jesus was born of a virgin mother. But he doesn't know what it means to be born of a virgin—he is unable to prove it.

The biggest argument against Jesus in the West has been over how he could be born to a virgin girl? It is unscientific. This is true: a child cannot be born of a virgin girl. But Jesus was

born of a virgin girl in the sense that his father was not consciously present at the time—he was only a medium. He was not a conscious participant in the birth of Jesus. He was totally unaware. He was only made to function as an instrument for this phenomenon to occur.

Often it happens that many superior souls wish to take birth but they don't find any appropriate situation for their conception. Today it has become even more difficult. It has been almost impossible to create superior conditions for the conception of higher souls, because the whole science pertaining to it has been lost.

What we call conception today is absolutely animal-like—there is no science behind it. Those who had given full consideration to the phenomenon of conception had worked out all the details. They had taken into account, for example, the minutest calculation of time in terms of finding the exact and the most characteristic moment to conceive. We can't imagine how much attention was paid to this phenomenon.

You may not be aware of the fact that most people go mad on the full moon, and few on the new moon. Science is not yet fully clear why this is so. The fact remains that the full moon does affect our mental state. Just as it brings storms in the seas, it stirs our emotions and raises them to the heights of lunacy. The word "lunatic" means one who is affected by the moon. "Lunar" means the moon, and "lunatic" means one who is moon-struck. It means the man has gone mad because he has been attacked by the moon.

There is a complete science that studies how the earth is affected by various forces every moment, every hour. If conception can take place during the time of these unique extra-terrestrial

influences, the results will be highly significant. And, if the conception does not occur during these moments, the results can be to the contrary. The whole of astrology was developed for the very purpose of finding out the exact moment of conception, because the influences working in that particular moment alone can give some indication of the conceived soul. At least some rough data can be obtained of the possibilities hidden in that moment of conception. Each second, each hour has its own implication.

So before entering sex, one needs the strength of meditation, years of celibacy behind it. Keep in mind, however, my understanding of *brahmacharya*, celibacy—it is neither an outcome of suppression nor repression. By celibacy I mean that which comes on its own, which happens spontaneously. Then one may enter in sex with a prayerful heart, invoking pure souls to accept the invitation. Not only are many such souls available, but there is a continuous race among them for entering a womb.

So in this situation, if you can invite certain souls, the subsequent results will become more clearly evident. Also, when such a soul is conceived, for nine months the baby needs to grow in the womb within a certain psychological and spiritual environment. For example, Mahavira's mother was kept under very special conditions. So was Buddha's mother. One prediction made before Buddha's birth was that he would be born when the mother is in a standing position. And that he will be born not inside, but outside the house. It was quite a strange thing: as Buddha's mother was traveling to her parents, on her way she stopped for a while and stood under the *sal*

tree, and Buddha was born, under the open skies.

Ordinarily, babies are born in the darkness of night. And normally, people make love in dark chambers, sneakily, with a sense of fear and guilt. People look at sex as if it is some kind of sin, a crime which has to be done surreptitiously, without anyone knowing about it. Obviously, sex of this kind is bound to produce grave consequences. In order to make love, freedom, openness, purity are essential.

At the time of love-making, even small things bring distinct results, such as the color on the walls, the light in the room, the fragrance. A whole science exists around it. If we could make use of the science of child-conception, a complete transformation of the human race could be brought about.

Even little things make a difference. Currently, a scientist is carrying on a small experiment which will bring about a fundamental change. He has devised a small belt which is to be tied around a pregnant woman's abdomen. It so happened that once a woman had to wear a belt for some reason in her pregnancy—she was ill. But it created a strange effect on the child. It was found that the belt pressed against the baby's head and the child was born with a very high IQ. This was purely accidental; a particular center of the child's brain was pressed.

Following this incident, the scientist has carried out many more experiments. It may well be that the child was naturally endowed with such high intelligence, and the whole thing was just a coincidence. However, the subsequent experiments proved that if pressure is applied at a particular place on a pregnant woman's abdomen, it

causes a remarkable change in the child's intelligence.

There are many *asanas*, body postures, which are meant to bring about the required pressure at a particular point. There are many breathing techniques for the same purpose. There are many words which, when articulated properly, bring about a certain pressure. All of these become helpful in allowing the genius, the health, the capability, the potentiality of the child to manifest fully.

Up to now man has discovered who knows how many ways to cause mischief, but he has not been putting enough energy into discovering ways which can build, enrich the future of mankind. But it is all possible. As soon as a woman conceives, she begins to reflect the possibilities the child is endowed with. It is in fact a dual process. In pregnancy, if the mother becomes irritable, angry, the child will be born with an angry temperament. Similarly, if the soul of an angry disposition has entered the womb, a woman who otherwise never became angry would begin to show anger. This is indeed very remarkable. And in view of this fact, experiments can be done for treating the anger of the conceived child right when it is in a seed form.

There are many souls which can take birth but haven't been able to yet. It's a very strange situation. It is something like a university which may give some people education up to the B.A., but has no additional provision or facility for postgraduate study or for research. In that case, many graduates would have to be on the look-out for some place where they can work toward an M.A. or do further research.

This world of ours develops the being and intelligence of some people only to a certain point, and then deserts them. Beyond that we have no means to help them further. But a systematic provision can be made. The right type of possibilities and conditions can be created so higher souls may find their way into this world. So let me repeat the few basic points.

The first thing is: our whole attitude toward sex is sick and dangerous. As long as the sacredness of sex is not recognized in this world, we'll go on causing more and more harm to mankind. So long as one has not become meditative prior to entering sex, his sex will remain animal-like; it can never have a human quality. And secondly, without a prolonged period of celibacy preceding the sexual involvement the creation of a powerful sperm is not possible. And without it there is no possibility of giving birth to a powerful soul.

You have said once before that if people like Krishna, Christ, Buddha, Mahavira do not appear on the earth in the next fifty years, the whole of humanity may perish. You also stated, as did Vivekananda, "I am in search of a hundred individuals who can show courage in attaining the ultimate heights of spirit. If that comes true, then it will be possible to save not only this country, but the entire humanity. This is the reason why in village after village I keep looking in the eyes of those who can be useful. From my side I am ready totally to take you

inward. Let's see if at the time of my death I will have to say as well that, 'I was looking for a hundred individuals, but couldn't find them.' If you are ready, then come along!''

Would you kindly explain what you mean by "I am ready" and "If you are ready"? Please explain what preparation is required on our part, and how do we prepare ourselves?

Let me just explain to you the meaning of your preparation. I have to do my own preparation—you have, of course, nothing to do with it. In fact, I don't have to do any preparation, I am ready.

So what is your preparation? There are three things involved in it. First, over the past thousands of years, we have become believers rather than enquirers. A believing mind has come to exist instead of an enquiring mind. We immediately believe, we never go on a search. And whatsoever is worth attaining in this world, cannot be attained without enquiring, searching. Even if it were possible to attain everything else without searching, one's own being cannot be attained without a quest. So the first thing is: one should have a mind full of questions. The first preparation is to have a probing mind.

You may say you do enquire, you do ask questions. Remember, however, your enquiries only look for an answer; I don't consider them enquiries. The question should not just look for an answer, it should look for an experience. Anyone can give you an answer; no one can give you the experience.

There are people who seem to be enquiring, and their enquiry seems religious. Ostensibly they ask, "Does God exist? Is there *moksha*, salvation?" But it appears they are looking for answers; someone should provide them the answers—that's all. If the query is only to find the answer, then sooner or later the answer will turn into a belief, because the questioner is not ready to take much trouble. His interest is simply that he should meet someone he can believe in, someone who can provide the answer and satisfy his curiosity.

I have no answers for anyone. I am not interested in supplying answers. If I do speak a little in terms of answering the questions, it is only so that the questioners don't altogether run away. I would like them to stay a little longer so that I may destroy their desire to find the answer, and instead help grow the seed desiring the experience.

People are ready to have answers, no one wants to *know* really. Answers are cheap. You can find them in books, gurus can provide them. Finding answers is an absolutely intellectual thing; it has nothing to do with living totally. A quest for experience is needed, a probing for the sake of experience is required. Let me tell you a story as an example.

In Tibet lived a mystic called Milarepa. There was a custom in Tibet that when someone went to see the Master, he had first to walk around him three times, then bow down to him seven times, and then sit in a corner reverently until the Master called and allowed him to ask. Milarepa went straight to the Master and caught him by the neck. He neither went around him three

times, nor did he bow seven times and wait his turn sitting quietly in the corner. He simply took hold of the Master and said:

"Tell me quickly what you want to say to me, because I don't even know what I want to ask. I know this much: that I don't know anything. If you have anything to say, then speak!"

The Master said, "Now wait a minute and behave yourself. Aren't you aware of the etiquette for asking a question? Don't you know that you are required to go around the Master three times, bow down to him seven times, and then sit in a corner till you are called?"

Milarepa said, "I'll do all that later. Tell me, in the process of going around three times, and bowing down seven times, and sitting in the corner respectfully, if I were to die, who will be responsible? Will you take the responsibility for my death, or will I be responsible? If you promise me I won't die while doing all that, I am willing to go around and bow down not only seven but seven hundred times. First answer me; the formalities can be done later, at leisure."

The Master said, "Sit down. You are the kind of person who is in search of an experience, not an answer. It is good that you didn't circle around me, because that business is meant only for those who can do it. When someone does this going around, I know a wrong man has come, because it shows he still has time to do it."

So the first element I look for in a seeker is the element of enquiry: the quest, not for an answer, but for the experience; a search not to find a philosophy, but to discover one's own being; a probing not simply to know, but to attain; not even just to attain, but to be. So this is the first thing.

The second thing is that normally, when we set out to achieve something we have to lose something. Nothing in this world is attained without losing something in return. But that is not the case in attaining truth. No matter how much wealth you may be willing to give away, the truth will not be found.

Neither can you buy the truth by having wealth, nor by losing it. Some people think they will buy truth once they have earned a lot of money; there are others who believe they will find truth if they renounce the money. But essentially, both types of people carry the idea that truth can be purchased by means of wealth.

Truth cannot be found through money. In fact, as long as you are not ready to give up yourself you won't be able to attain truth by renouncing whatever else you may have. Truth can be discovered not by losing what you have, but by disappearing as you are. It needs courage to lose yourself as you are.

So the second element is: are you ready to disappear? Are you willing to give yourself away? And it is not that you have to give or anything, because why would truth be interested in having you? The readiness to give yourself is enough. Just the very readiness in itself is as good as giving away yourself. Once you have shown the readiness, the matter is finished. You simply need to be prepared to disappear. One who cannot do so will never be able to set out on the great journey.

People are always ready to give away things. Someone says, "I'll renounce my home, I'll renounce my parents, wife, son, property." But no one ever says, "I'll renounce my self." As long as

one doesn't show the readiness to give himself up, he can't progress on the path of finding truth.

The question is: is the wife really yours that you can renounce her? No husband can ever put a claim on his wife. It becomes apparent to him every hour of the day that she is not his possession. So if you are renouncing that which was never yours in the first place, you are simply deceiving yourself. Who are you deceiving really? Is your wealth really yours that you talk so much about giving it away? The fact is, you have nothing to call your own except your self, that which you are. How strange, you go on talking about renouncing all that is *not* yours, while that which is truly yours, you never even mention giving it up! This won't work.

So the second thing I look for is: the courage to let go of one's self. And the third thing that is expected of you in regard to your preparation is infinite awaiting, infinite patience. Actually this journey is such that it would be a kind of childishness for anyone to ask for immediate results. Not that one can't achieve instantly—one can; except that one has to be in a state where he has no instant demand, where he says, "Let it be whenever it has to be, it is okay with me. I am willing to wait."

So patience is needed. And that is the very element which is absolutely lacking in the world today. There is no other reason for the decline of religion than this lack of patience. Patience is the very root of religion. Only one who is patient can be religious. Everything else except religion is tangible, perceptible. Religion is absolutely invisible: you can't touch it, you can't lock it in a safe, it can't become your bank balance, you

can't put it in a safe deposit vault and then go home and sleep without a care. Religion is the only thing one can go in search of only if one is ready to pursue it with patience.

The biggest problem with religion is that it is not attained piecemeal—an inch today, a couple of inches tomorrow—so that one may live in some hope. Even an impatient man carries hope that if he has earned a rupee today, he can earn two tomorrow, or four the day after. And if he should go on making money like this, he can earn millions someday.

No, religion is either attained instantaneously or not attained at all. There are no stages in between—you don't find it in parts. The day you attain it, it comes in an instant—it explodes on you. Nothing happens as long as you have not attained it in one instant; till then you remain in utter darkness. In that moment of darkness, those who have no patience begin to look for something immediately available. They start collecting rocks and pebbles which are lying all around, and are accessible right away. They begin to look for money, fame, and so on, which can be achieved without waiting for long, which seem to be just around the corner. In regard to worldly things, there is one advantage: you can get them in fragments, in installments. You cannot find religion in installments.

So the third element is awaiting—infinite awaiting. But waiting is very difficult, because the mind says, "Who knows whether I will attain or not? Perhaps I am waiting in vain. Maybe it is already too late, it's time to give up. The time I have wasted so far could have been put to a better use—in the pursuit of some tangible gains, in

working toward substantial achievements. I missed all that for nothing." An impatient mind such as this can never become free.

In fact, there is no connection between impatience and peace, between impatience and equanimity. Peace and impatience cannot go together. Impatience means unrest, impatience means excitement, agitation. Such a mind is bound to miss.

Patience means as if the sea has calmed down—not a single ripple, just mirror-like. The interesting thing is that the moon always shines above—if the sea could calm down and become mirror-like, it could catch the moon in its reflection this very moment. But an agitated sea, full of waves, can't catch the moon.

Truth is ever-present. God is close, all around us, herenow. But our impatient mind—unstable, restless, wavering—fails to have any grip over God. God does not reflect in it, because it fails to become a mirror. Awaiting turns mind into a mirror. And the day one becomes a mirror, he attains everything that very moment. Because everything was always present, only you were not present as a mirror. Once you become present like a mirror, everything that is, that ever was, is at once reflected in it.

So you need to fulfill these three conditions. Once that's taken care of, the matter is finished. The rest will happen very easily. The difficulty right now is that you are standing with open hands, while I am holding a jug of water asking you to fold your hands, make a cup of your palms so that I may pour water into it. Once your hands are cupped, once you have settled down a little, once you have become grounded even for a moment, the water can be poured. But don't be

under the wrong impression that I will be pouring the water—as soon as your hands are cupped, the water just flows into them. Even I can be nothing more than a witness to it. As a witness, I can simply say, “Yes, this man has indeed joined his palms and the phenomenon of water pouring into them has taken place.”

This is what initiation means really. How can a man initiate another man? One always receives initiation from God alone. Of course this much is possible, that the one who has gone a little ahead can testify that the hands are indeed joined into a cup, and therefore the initiation will happen. So from my side there is no need for any special preparation. If your preparation is complete, then I can be the witness to it.

So I have given you three *sutras* for your preparation. Don't think over them. Try living them and they will be in your grasp immediately. As you think, you lose; as you think, you miss. Even a little thought, and all is lost. So don't think. Understand these three *sutras* and search within yourself. Look and see if there is any desire for answers lurking inside. Pay attention to the search for experience. Make sure you are not looking for any intellectual theory built around the idea whether God created this world or not. What difference does it make if God has created the world? And if he has not, how does that matter? So ask yourself, “Am I truly in search of an experience?” Make this point very clear inside you.

It is okay if you are not seeking an experience. But then it should become clear to you that your only interest is in having the answer, not the experience. With that clarity, an honesty will arise in you. Then at least you won't have to

bother about going through the experience—you will follow the answers and be finished with them. Remember, the very recognition of the fact that you are only looking for the answers will immediately make you realize the futility of your search. Because after all, what will you do with the answers given in words?

Words neither satisfy your hunger nor quench your thirst—words are good for nothing. If you want to cross a river, you need a real boat—the word “boat” described in the dictionary won’t be of any use. If you bring the dictionary which describes the word “boat” as a vessel that carries you across the river and you try to use it, the dictionary will drown and so will you. And the river will simply laugh at your stupidity. The river will say, “If you really wanted to go across with the help of the word ‘boat’ given in the book, you should have also crossed the river described in the book! You shouldn’t bring the boat given in the book to cross a real river. You should have drawn the boat in the book and the river as well—that would have worked.”

If you are looking for answers, then a book is good enough. Then you don’t need to do anything in life. But if you become clear about this, then the book will soon begin to bore you. Not only that, but sooner or later words will seem worthless; all theories and doctrines will look like trash; you will feel like throwing away the weight of all scriptures. And a quest for experience will begin.

But first it is necessary to make it clear within yourself: “What exactly am I looking for? Is this just out of fun, out of mere curiosity, or is it a *mumuksha*?” *Mumuksha* means a burning desire, a search, for experience.

The second thing you need to be clear about is: "What am I ready to let go?" If God were to stand before you and say, "I am ready to come to you, I am ready to be yours, what can *you* give me in return?" The chances are you will start feeling your pocket—most people will. You will start counting rupees, and begin figuring whether to give five rupees, or ten, or whatever. Or what else would you give? At such a moment would you be able to give yourself away? Would you be able to say to God, "I offer myself. Except myself what else do I have?"

If this becomes clear to you, then the second *sutra*: "I am ready to give myself," will become instrumental in changing your life. This readiness should come simply as a clarity—and that's all. It needs to be clear to you that, "Should the time come, I am willing to give myself. I won't fail in that. I won't say, 'Wait a little while. Let me first discuss this with my family, let me consult my friends. How can I just give myself right away? Please wait for a few days. Let my son be married first.'"

The point is, it should become clearly evident to you that when the time comes, you can stake yourself without the slightest hesitation.

There is no gamble greater than religion. All other bets are very small in nature. In other bets you wager and either you lose or win something, but *you* always remain outside. In the case of religion you wager your own self, and there is no question of losing or winning. Because when you have wagered *yourself*, who is going to win or lose? Now *you* are the stake, now there is no way to either lose or win. Now you are gone. So let this be clear to you.

And the third thing you need to make plain to yourself is that when you set out in search of the eternal, a childlike impatience won't work. You need infinite patience. And one who is ready to have infinite patience—he attains now and here. So make these three things clear in your mind, and the preparation will take place on its own accord.

DISCIPLINE OF SUCHNESS

Bombay
Evening of August 6, 1970

Bhagwan, you have said before that if a seeker in his experiment should make an intense resolve that he would like to die, that he would like to return to his own center, in a few days his life energy will begin to contract from within and the seeker will be able to see his body as dead—first from within, and then from without. Consequently, his fear of death will disappear forever. So the question is: in this condition, does one need to make any special preparation or take any extra precaution so that the subtle body may return safely to the physical body? Or, does the return of the subtle body happen on its own? Please explain.

In many ways, man lives essentially through the mind. Even when we perceive something as a physical occurrence, deep down it turns out to be a psychological phenomenon. All bodily manifestations have their roots in the mind. Let me

explain a few things in this regard, then it will be easy to follow the question.

Until fifty years ago, all human illnesses were treated as illnesses of the body. In the last fifty years, the more we have learned about illnesses, the more the proportion of physical illnesses has decreased while that of the psychological illnesses has increased. Even the greatest of all physiologists is ready to admit today that more than fifty percent of all human ailments are psychological. Sickneses which are otherwise considered as physical, more than half of them are caused by the mind. Mind is the very substratum of man's being, his existence. It is the source of our life, it is the source of our illness, and it is the very source of our death. That's why so much importance is given to the will.

If you have ever witnessed an experiment in hypnosis, there are a few things about it worth keeping in mind. A hypnotized person is simply one whose conscious mind is asleep and whose unconscious mind is awake. When the conscious mind goes to sleep, the person stops doubting, because all doubts and misgivings are limited to the conscious mind.

If we divide the human mind into ten parts, it will appear that one part of it is conscious while the remaining nine are unconscious. Nine parts are in the dark unconscious; only a small portion—one tenth of the mind—is awake. It is this conscious mind that doubts, thinks, ponders. If this conscious mind were to sleep, then the remaining nine parts below would stay totally receptive. There, no questions are asked, no doubts are raised.

In the state of hypnosis, the doubting mind is put to sleep and the undoubting, receptive mind

comes into effect. In that state, if you were to place a small piece of rock on the hand of the hypnotized person and tell him it is a hot coal, he will cry out in pain as if his hand had been burned. He will at once throw the rock away—just as he would if a real hot coal had been placed on his hand.

Up to this point one may assume that just an idea in his mind must have caused this to happen. But the astonishing thing is that blisters appear on his hand—the same as it would have if a hot coal had been placed there. So apparently, although you had placed an ordinary piece of rock, the person's mind totally accepted your word that it was a hot coal. And the body has no means of denying the mind, so it acts accordingly. Remember well, if the mind accepts totally, the body will have to follow it.

There is a reverse of this experiment too, which is even more astonishing. You can place an ember in the hypnotized person's hand and tell him it is just a cold pebble. The man will keep on holding the ember and yet no blisters will appear on his hand. Without the mind's permission, the body is helpless to do anything.

That is why fakirs are able to dance barefoot on fire—there is no miracle in it. It's just a little experiment in the science of mind. There are ten fakirs dancing on the fire, they openly invite anyone to join them, so there is no question of any fraud. You are welcome to dance with them. But that will be possible only when watching those ten people you become fully convinced the fire is not affecting them. Once you are convinced—that if they are not having burns, you won't either—you reach the same state a hypnotized person does. In that state, the one part of

your mind is not doubting, and the nine parts are believing—now you can jump into the fire, your feet won't burn. One who has any doubts will not jump, but the one who has none will jump in. What this means is: even fire cannot burn you if the mind is not open to it, and even the coldness can cause burns if the mind is ready for it.

Experiments in hypnosis reveal very profound truths about the mind. For example, I was once conducting experiments in hypnosis on a girl. I was a guest in her house. We were sitting in a room. Altogether we were ten people: the girl, myself, and eight other people including her mother, who was seated right across from her.

When I placed the girl under hypnosis, I told her that her mother had left the room. Then I asked her to open her eyes and count the number of people present in the room. She counted nine because for her, the mother who was sitting across on the sofa did not exist. I asked her several times who was sitting on the sofa and her answer was, "The sofa is empty." Her mother called out to her. She looked all around the room—except at the sofa where her mother was sitting—to see where her voice came from. As far as she was concerned, the mother was not seated on the sofa.

Once again I asked her to close her eyes and told her that her father, who was not in the room, had come and was sitting across from her on the sofa. Then I asked her to open her eyes and count the number of people in the room. She counted ten. I asked, "You had said earlier the sofa across from you was empty; why are you counting it now?" She said, "The sofa is not empty, father is sitting on it."

Her mother, who was actually sitting on the sofa, did not exist for her. But her father who was

not even in the room—she counted him. Her mind had totally accepted my word.

A resolute mind holds wonderful possibilities. For those who face many defeats in their lives, the readiness of their mind to accept defeat is far more responsible than the circumstances. The world as such has very little to do with the failures met by people—ninety percent of the responsibility lies with the people themselves. When one is ninety percent ready to encounter failure, it would be a little too much if the world didn't cooperate even ten percent with it—the world makes a ten percent contribution.

The same principle applies to those who go on attaining success as it does to those who meet with failures. Those who are healthy and those who remain mostly sick, those who are peaceful and those who are continuously restless—all are subject to the same principle. Deep down, whatsoever you want to be that's what you become. Thoughts become objects, thoughts become happenings, thoughts create your personality. Essentially, we alone are responsible for the way we live, and the level at which we live. We alone lay the foundation of the life we live. Once this truth is understood, what I am explaining to you will become clear.

I have already mentioned to you that as long as one has not entered death voluntarily, he cannot be free from the fear of death. Someday death will come, of course, but then you won't be entering into it voluntarily—you will be compelled to face it. It wouldn't be surprising if you closed your eyes and became unconscious when forced to go somewhere. You can't be forced into something if you are fully conscious. But there is no need for one to be under such compulsion. Dying voluntarily, one can see death even while being

alive. Watching such a death is a fascinating experience—far more fascinating than the experience of ordinary death, because this death is seen of your own free will. You may ask, however, "How can one die voluntarily and see death?"

This also needs to be understood. Two kinds of mechanisms are working in your life, in your body—one is voluntary, the other is involuntary. There are some parts in your body which move only with your willingness. For example, my hand moves only when I want it to; it won't move if I don't want it to move. But the blood inside this hand does not flow according to my desire; it won't stop flowing if I don't want it to. So the working of the blood is involuntary. The same is the case with the throbbing of my heart, the beating of my pulse, the food digesting in my stomach—none of these functions follow my command, they are involuntary.

So our biological organism consists of two parts: one that works according to our desire, and the other which works independent of our desire. However, if one were to increase his willpower, what is outside the realm of desire now would become part of it. Similarly, if one's willpower were to decrease, what is now within the reach of his desire would be no longer. The paralytic condition is a case in point.

More than seventy percent of all cases of paralysis are psychological in nature. Actually it is not that a man is struck with paralysis; only his legs, for instance, go beyond the control of his willpower. Even this is not right to say. How can legs manage to get out of one's control? Truly speaking, the range, or the scope of his willpower becomes narrow. What it means is the will of

such a person has shrunk. It is as though as one's feet are sticking out from underneath a shrunken blanket. The feet remain beyond the reach of the blanket. Similarly, the willpower of a paralytic person shrinks, and loses its control over the limbs.

It has occurred many times; for example, once a house caught fire at night and the people inside came running out. But they suddenly remembered that the old man who had been paralyzed and sick for years had been left behind. Before they could figure out how to rescue the man, they saw him come running out of the house. They were shocked and frightened. They forgot all about the fire and asked him, "How did you come out? How did you manage to walk?" The moment they asked how he managed to walk, the man said, "Are you joking? How can I walk?" And he fell down.

In the stress and fear caused by the fire, the circumference of the man's willpower grew larger—the feet came within reach of the blanket—and the man walked out. Having come out, he suddenly realized: how could he really have walked out? And the scope of his willpower once again became narrow, the feet once again were out from under the blanket!

The pulse rate can be brought under voluntary control. This is not a feat that only yogis can perform—you can too. It's a very small experiment. Check your pulse rate for a minute. Then close your eyes and simply feel that your pulse is beating faster. Open your eyes after ten minutes and check. You'll rarely come across a man whose pulse rate will not increase if he does this experiment. That's why when the doctor checks your pulse, it is never the same. The moment he

touches you, you become a bit anxious, and that causes the pulse rate to increase. This is even more true if you are being checked by a lady doctor!

The heartbeat can be controlled too—almost to the point of stopping it. Scientific experiments have been carried out to this effect and the fact has been accepted. About forty years ago, a man by the name of Brahmayogi astounded doctors at the Bombay Medical College by stopping his heartbeat completely. He repeated the same act at Oxford, and later at Calcutta University.

This man could do three things. Firstly, he could stop the blood circulation completely—not only could he stop it, but he could control its flow as well. He could let it run or withhold its movement at will. When he would stop the circulation, not a drop of blood would come out even when the vein was cut. The third thing he could do was to take in any kind of poison and retain it in his stomach for half an hour, after which he would throw it out of his system. However, this experiment finally caused his death later on.

Many x-rays were taken while the poison was still inside his stomach. No gastric juices, no blood released and mixed with the poison. They remained separate until he allowed them to mix. The man died in Rangoon. After having performed the act of taking poison at the Rangoon University, he was driven home in a car. The car got into an accident, and by the time he reached home forty-five minutes had passed since he took the poison. He could withhold the mixing of the poison for not more than thirty minutes. So he reached home unconscious. He could just manage to keep the poison out during the thirty-minute range of his willpower—his practice was

limited to thirty minutes only. He crossed that limit. For the next fifteen minutes the poison was able to penetrate the limits of his will and mix into his internal system.

There is no part in our body which cannot be brought within the power of our will, and there is no part which cannot go outside this power either. Both things can happen. Entering death voluntarily is a deeper experiment. It's an experiment where one contracts his life energy at will. What needs to be kept in mind is: if the will is applied totally, the energy is bound to shrink within. It can't be otherwise.

Actually, the way our life energy has spread out is a result of our will too. For example, we think we are able to see because we have eyes. According to the scientists, the reverse is the case: because we want to see through this part of our body, the eyes have appeared there. Otherwise, there is basically no difference between the skin of our eyes and that of our hands. The eye is formed of skin as well, except that it has become transparent. The same skin is in the nose, only it has become specialized in picking up smells. The same principle that made the skin of the eyes transparent made the skin of the nose sensitive to smell. Similar is the case with regard to our ears, except they have become capable of picking up sound.

All this has happened as an effect of our will—the collective will asserted over millions upon millions of years. It has not come about as a consequence of an individual's will; the same will was exercised generation after generation, and it showed the result.

There is a woman in Russia who can read with her fingers—not Braille, the language for

the blind—she reads any ordinary book, with closed eyes, just by placing her fingers on the printed letters. As a result of the lifelong practice, her fingers have become so sensitive that they can detect the infinitesimal difference between the print and the blank paper. Our fingers won't be able to do this to such an extent.

When we look at a tree, we only see the color green, while a painter's eyes see a thousand kinds of green trees having shades of green blended in a thousand ways. So whereas green is just one color for an ordinary person, in the eyes of a painter the color green is not one but many colors of the same kind. To him, the difference between one green and another is as obvious as it is between green and yellow, or between green and red. However, one needs a certain kind of sensitivity in order to see such fine shades. Obviously, people ordinarily don't possess such sensitivity.

A musician is able to catch subtle nuances in music which we cannot. Not only is he able to catch the nuances, he even begins to experience the gap, the emptiness between the two notes. The real music is not born of sound, rather it springs from the moments of silence existing between the sounds. The notes on either side merely do the job of projecting that silence, that's all. But people have no idea of this silence; for them music is no more than noise.

For a master musician, the words, or the notes have no direct bearing upon the music. To him the musical notes merely serve the purpose of emphasizing the state of no-sound that exists in between. So whatever we practice continuously, whatever we resolve persistently, begins to manifest, show results.

The way human beings, birds, animals, plants live, is determined by their will. Whatever we resolve deeply is what we become. There is a significant account in the life of Ramakrishna. In his life Ramakrishna had practiced six or seven spiritual disciplines of different religions. He felt that if all religions lead to the same place, why not follow their methods and verify this truth? So he underwent the disciplines of the Christians, the Sufis, the Vaishnavas, the Shaivas, the Tantrikas, and so on. Whatever method he could lay his hands on, he tried.

However, no one knew what he was doing, because these disciplines were practiced on the inner plane. Outwardly, no one could know what was going on with Ramakrishna. For instance, how could one figure out from the outside what was happening inside him when he followed the discipline of the Sufis? And he himself never mentioned a word about what he was involved in. Nevertheless, in the course of these practices, he went through a certain discipline which produced such incredible results that even people from outside could not miss what was happening to him.

There is a sect in Bengal called the *Sakhi-Sampradaya*. In this sect, the seeker looks upon himself as Krishna's beloved or wife. He begins to live like Krishna's girlfriend. Whether the seeker is a male or a female doesn't matter. To the followers of this sect, Krishna is the only man; the seeker becomes his beloved, his Radha, his girlfriend.

For six months Ramakrishna practiced the discipline of this sect, and strangely enough, the tone of his voice became feminine. No one could distinguish his voice from a distance. His gait

became feminine. Actually, men and women cannot walk alike; their biological structure is basically different. Since the woman carries a child, she has a special place in her abdomen for that purpose—which is not the case with men. Hence both walk differently. No matter how carefully a woman may take her steps, she can never walk like a man. She can never run like a man does—there is no way; their physical make up is different.

But Ramakrishna began running like a woman; he began walking like a woman; his gestures, his voice, took on a feminine quality. One could explain away all these changes by assuming that any man with some effort can walk or talk like a woman. The astonishing thing, however, was that his breasts developed and became womanlike. Even this too, one can rationalize by pointing out that many men grow breasts in their old age. But the most incredible thing was that Ramakrishna began to have a regular menstrual period in much the same way as a woman does. For medical science, this phenomenon caused great interest and concern.

After having practiced the discipline for six months, it took a year and a half for Ramakrishna to recover from its impact and come back to his normal state. Just by exercising his will-power Ramakrishna assumed he was the girlfriend of Krishna, and his personality changed accordingly.

In Europe, stigmata appear on the hands of many Christian monks. Stigmata are . . . When Jesus was crucified, nails were driven into his palms and the blood came out. So there are many Christian monks who, following the morning of Good Friday, the day Jesus was crucified,

identify themselves with Jesus. They become one with Jesus. As the hour of crucifixion approaches, thousands of people gather to watch them. The monks stand with their arms outspread as if they are tied to the cross. And, as if nails have been driven into their hands, holes appear in their palms and blood begins to flow. With such resolve do they become identified with Jesus that, as it were, they go through an actual crucifixion. Without any means being used, a hole being made, a nail being driven, the blood begins to flow from their hands.

We are not aware of the immense possibilities in which willpower can be effective. Entering death voluntarily is the most profound of all experiments in exercising one's will. Ordinarily it is not difficult to make a resolve in favor of life—we indeed want to live. But it is very difficult to make use of will for the sake of experiencing death.

Those who really want to know the full meaning of life should have an experience of death at least once. Without having seen what death is like, they can never really know what life is worth. That's the only way to realize that they have something of immense value—the elixir of life—which they can know only by passing through the experience of death. One who cannot go through this experience remains sadly deprived; because if he could see once on his own what death is like, the fear of death would no longer exist for him—then there is no death at all.

Simply using your total willpower you can draw your consciousness inside from all parts of your body. You close your eyes and feel that the consciousness is shrinking inward. You feel the

energy moving away from your hands and feet towards the inside. You see the energy moving down from your head. The energy begins to converge upon the center from where it originated—the rays begin to withdraw from all points.

If this experiment is carried on with an intense feeling, in an instant the whole body becomes dead; only one point remains inside—alive. The entire body becomes lifeless, while the inner core remains alive like a flame. This living center can now be experienced very well as something separate from the body. It is as though rays of light were spread out in pitch darkness and it was impossible to differentiate between the light and the darkness, and then all the rays were to withdraw and come back in at one point—the contrast between the darkness and light would become clearly apparent.

So when the vital energy inside us withdraws and becomes condensed at a certain point, one begins to feel the entire body separate from that point. Now all you need is a little willpower and it will be out of the body. Then just think of going out of the body, and you will be out of your body. Now you can see the body from outside, lying like a corpse. A thin silver cord will still keep you connected with the navel of your body, however. This is the very passage for going in and out of the body.

You will be amazed to see that as soon as this substance, this condensed energy comes out of the body, it assumes a new form of its own—that it enlarges and becomes a new body. This is the subtle body. It is an exact duplicate of the physical body, except that it's like a fuzzy film, transparent. If anyone were to touch this body, his hand would pass through without affecting it.

So the first principle in the discipline of operating the will is to pull all the life energy inward at one point. The moment this energy becomes condensed at the inner core, it jumps out of the body. Just a desire to come out of the body, and the phenomenon occurs. And again, just a desire to get back into the body, and it is back in. This does not involve any doing on your part. The only thing that requires any action is that of simply drawing all the energy inside at a certain point. Once that happens, your subtle body can easily get out of the physical body and get back in.

If the seeker goes through this experience once, his entire life is transformed instantly. Then what he had known as life until that moment, he will no longer be able to call it the same. Similarly, he will not look upon death the way he did until then. He will find it a little difficult to run after the things he chased in the past. It will be hard for him to fight for things as he used to. He will no longer be able to ignore things he ignored previously.

The life is bound to change, because it is the kind of experience which can never leave the life just the way it was. Therefore, every seeker of meditation must at some time or other go through the out-of-the-body experience. It's an essential step, which once having been taken brings about incredible consequences for his future.

It's not difficult, only a firm resolve is required. Making a firm resolve is tough, not the technique itself. Hence it's a little difficult to jump directly into this experiment. One needs first to begin experimenting with smaller

resolutions. As one succeeds in these, his will-power goes on increasing.

Actually, the various religious practices in the world are not religious practices really. They are, in fact, preparatory to building one's resolve. For example, a man fasts for three days—this is simply a discipline for strengthening one's will-power. Fasting in itself is of little advantage; the real gain lies in the fact that he completed his vow, that he maintained his resolve. Another man declares solemnly that he would stand in one place for twelve hours. Now his standing for twelve hours is of no use; the actual benefit comes from his making that resolve and the completion of it.

By and by, people forgot the basic idea that these techniques were meant for strengthening one's determination. The man thinks standing in itself is enough, so he continues to stand. He loses sight of the fact that simply standing there is purposeless. The basic idea is to exercise the inner firmness which decides to stand, and then sticking to that decision.

Any means can be used in order to fulfill one's determination. Even small resolves can do—no need to make big resolutions. For example, a man may stand in this balcony and resolve not to look below for six hours—even this much will do. The question is not that the man will gain something by not looking downward. The question is: he determined something and went on to fulfill it.

When one determines to do something and does it, his energy within becomes stronger; he becomes more and more centered. He no longer feels like a leaf drifting in the air. A sort of crystallization begins to take place within him.

For the first time, some foundations are laid in his life.

So one should begin experimenting with smaller resolves, and this way collect the energy within. We come across lots of opportunities to do so. For example, while driving along the road simply make a resolve that you will not read the billboards. Your doing so is obviously not going to harm anyone, but it's an opportunity to exercise your will. And no one needs to know about it—it's your own inner process.

You will find that with this resolve, sitting in the car even for half an hour did not prove to be worthless. You will come out with the feeling that you have gained something, that you are richer than you were a half hour ago. So the question is not where you experiment, or what means are used for that purpose. I just gave you an example. The point is, you may follow any experiment that will help you strengthen your will-power. It would be good if you carried on with the small ones.

If a man is asked to go in meditation for forty minutes by simply closing his eyes, he can't do it; he opens his eyes frequently and looks around. Now this man is without a will, he is not centered. There are great advantages in closing the eyes, it causes no harm. But this man can't even hold to his resolve by keeping his eyes closed for forty minutes; not much else can be expected of him.

When the same man is asked to breathe deeply and vigorously for ten minutes, within two minutes he slows down his breathing. When you remind him to take deep breaths, he makes one or two feeble attempts and again goes back to slow breathing. This man is not centered at all.

Breathing ten minutes deeply is not a very difficult thing to do. And actually the question is not what will be gained or lost by breathing deeply for ten minutes. What is certain, however, is that by resolving to breathe deeply for ten minutes, this man will become centered. Something inside him will become crystallized. He will overcome something, he will succeed in breaking some kind of resistance working inside him. And his vagrant mind will be weakened, because it will come to realize there is no way to push the man around; the only way to get along with him is to obey.

You drive by every day. Maybe you don't read the billboards along the road. But the day you will decide not to read them, your mind will do its utmost to force you to read the advertisements. The power of mind lies in your being irresolute. As your determination grows, the mind goes dead. The stronger the will, the more dead is the mind. The stronger the mind, the weaker becomes the will.

The mind did not press you to look at the billboards in the past because you had not challenged it. Today you posed the challenge. The mind will find a thousand and one excuses for you to look outside. It will contrive a thousand ways to force you to break your resolve and read the signs. It will use all its cunning. This is how things are.

We only live by the mind. A seeker begins to live by his will. One who lives by the mind is not a seeker at all. Only one who lives by his resolve is a true seeker indeed. A seeker means one whose mind is being transformed into will.

So pick very small situations—you can choose for yourself. And then experiment a few times during the day. No one needs to know

about it; but there is no need to go into isolation either. Just do the experiment quietly and move along. For example, make a small resolve that, "When someone becomes angry at me, I will laugh it off." When carried out a number of times, each experiment will yield such rich dividends that you will thank the person who became angry at you.

So make this tiny resolve: "Whenever anyone gets angry at me, I'll simply laugh—no matter what." Within fifteen days you'll find you have become a different person. The whole quality of your being has changed—you are no longer the same man who lived fifteen days ago. Make very small decisions and try to live up to them. In the process of living the decisions when you become confident of making bigger decisions, then go ahead and make a little higher resolutions.

The final resolution a seeker should find worth making is that of meeting death voluntarily. The day you feel you can, go ahead and do it. Having determined, the day you see your body lying like a corpse, you will know all that there is to know. Then no scripture in the world, no guru will have anything new to add to it.

One who commits suicide also tries to kill himself voluntarily. And until he is dead completely, he remains aware of the process of dying too: that the body is becoming cold, or the life energy is shrinking, and so on. But he cannot come back in the body after having reached the final state. Isn't suicide similar to the experiment in voluntary death?

Suicide can be used as an experiment in willpower, but normally people who commit suicide don't do it for that reason. Ordinarily, the man who commits suicide does not do it feeling himself responsible for it. Mostly he feels people are driving him to commit suicide—certain circumstances, certain events are compelling him to end his life. If the circumstances were not such, he would not have attempted the suicide.

This man, for instance, was in love with someone, but his love was not returned. Now he wants to end his life. Had his love been reciprocated, there would have been no need for him to embrace death. In fact, this man who is contemplating suicide is not doing so with any readiness to die really. He is willing to live only on one condition. Since the condition has not been fulfilled—the denial of life. The man is not interested in dying actually; the truth is, he has lost interest in living.

So basically this kind of suicide is a forced one. Therefore, if a person who is about to end his life can be stopped even for two seconds, perhaps he will not attempt it the second time. Just the delay of a couple of moments can be enough, because in those moments his mental resolve will fall apart—it was put together forcibly.

A man committing suicide is not making a resolve. The fact is he is running away from making the resolve. Ordinarily, a man who has killed himself is not a brave man; he is a coward. Actually, life was asking him to exercise his will; it was telling him, "The woman you loved before . . . now make a resolve and forget her." But the man didn't have the capacity. Life was pointing out to him, "Forget the person you loved before, love someone else." But the man didn't have the guts.

Life tells someone, "You were rich until yesterday, today you are bankrupt. Nevertheless, live!" He doesn't have the courage. He is not able to make a determination and live. He sees only one way out: self-destruction. He does this in order to avoid making firm resolves. Meeting death like this is not a demonstration of his positive will; rather, it is a show of his negative will. A negative will is of no use.

Such a man will be born with an even weaker soul in his next life—with a much more impotent soul than the one he had in this life, because he escaped from a situation that had offered him an opportunity to arouse his will. It is as if a child runs away from his class as the examination hour approaches. In a way, he has shown his determination too. Thirty students were taking the exam, but this fellow decided to run away. This indicates a negative will. The will to appear for the exam was a positive one; it meant willingness to put up a struggle. But the boy escaped from the struggle.

An escapist shows his determination too. When a man confronted by a lion runs and climbs up a tree, in a way he also uses his will. But that won't necessarily make him a man of will, because after all, he is running away, he is escaping. A suicidal tendency is essentially an escapist tendency. There is no resolve in it. Death can be used, of course, for the purpose of exercising willpower—but that's a different matter.

For example, in the Jaina tradition, death has also been used to strengthen willpower. Mahavira is the only person in the world who allowed if any seeker wished to use death for this purpose. No one else has given such permission. Only Mahavira has said one can use death as a

spiritual discipline—but not the kind of instantaneous death which occurs by taking poison. One can't build his willpower in one instant; it requires a long span of time. Mahavira says, "Go on a fast, and die of hunger."

It takes ninety days for a normal, healthy man to die of hunger. If he is weak in his resolve—even a little bit—the desire for food will return the very next day. By the third day he will begin cursing at having created such a nuisance for himself, and will start finding ways to get out of it.

It is very difficult to maintain the desire to stay hungry for ninety days. When Mahavira said, "Stay hungry and die," there was no room for anyone to create any deception. Because in ninety days, anyone who has even the slightest lack of will would escape much earlier in the process. So there is no way to deceive.

If Mahavira had given the permission to die by taking poison, drowning in a river, jumping off a mountain, it would have been a matter of instant death. Of course, we all manage to make a resolve good enough for one moment. But a warrior good for showing only a moment's bravery is of no use on the battlefield, because he will become a coward the next moment. He will turn out to be a coward with as much resolve as he was brave a moment ago.

So Mahavira has given permission to commit *santhara*, causing death to oneself as a spiritual discipline. If anyone wished to put himself through a final test, even if it meant meeting death voluntarily, Mahavira had given permission for it. This is truly very significant and worth giving a thought. Mahavira is the first person on this earth who has authorized that a seek-

er can follow this discipline. There are a couple of reasons for it.

For one thing, Mahavira was fully assured that no one dies really. Hence he felt there was no need to worry so much about death, and he found no harm in a seeker pursuing this discipline.

Secondly, besides being experienced himself, Mahavira was also confident that if a man were to seek death unwaveringly for fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety, or a hundred days, the very greatness of that event is bound to transform him.

We all experience a moment or two when the thought of death crosses our mind. There is hardly a person in the world who has not wished to die at least a few times during his life. Of course, that he didn't die is a different matter. The fact is, such moments do come when a man wishes to die. But then he takes a cup of tea and forgets the whole thing. The wife gets fed up with her husband and contemplates hanging herself. Then the husband comes home with tickets for the movie. That's it, the woman drops the whole idea. She finds it too boring.

Once I had an occasion to stay at a place where a Bengali professor and his wife were my next-door neighbors. The very first night of my stay I heard loud noises coming from the other side. There was a terrible fight going on between the husband and wife. I could hear everything through the wall. The husband was threatening to kill himself. I was in a quandary. There was no one else around except me, and things looked rather serious. I wondered whether I should go over and help. Although it was the first night and the couple were total strangers to me. I felt it

didn't matter if we knew each other or not. I said to myself, "They are my neighbors; I'll be responsible too if the man dies." Nevertheless, I restrained myself in the hope that when the man would actually walk out to kill himself I would go and stop him.

Then, for some time, all was quiet. I thought the matter was settled between the two and that both had cooled down. But still I felt I should go out and see what was going on. So I came out. The door next to my room was open and the wife was sitting inside. The fellow had already gone.

I asked her, "Where did your husband go?"

She said, "Don't be worried, he has gone away like this many times before; he'll be back soon."

I said, "But he has gone to kill himself!"

She said, "You need not be worried, he is sure to come back."

And indeed, about fifteen minutes later the husband returned. I was still waiting outside. I said to him, "You have come back?" He was unaware that I knew he had gone to commit suicide.

He said, "Can't you see the clouds have gathered? Looks like it's going to rain. I had not taken an umbrella with me, so I came back." A man wanting to kill himself drops the idea if he is without an umbrella! This is how it is.

We all think of dying many times, but not for the sake of dying really. The idea comes to us because there is some problem in our life. We think of ending our lives because we lack resoluteness. Just a little trouble, a little difficulty, and one rushes to end it all.

One who wants to meet death because he can't face the problems of life is not a man of will

However, if a man sets out to have a direct, positive experience of death, if he is on his way to know what death is with a positive attitude, if he has no conflict with life, if he is not against life, then even in death this man is searching for life. This is a totally different thing.

There is yet another significant factor involved in this matter.

Ordinarily, we cannot determine our birth. Although ultimately we do influence birth, but our determination of it happens through our unconscious state. We never know why we will be born, where we will be born, and for what purpose we will be born. But death, in a way, is something which can be determined by us. Death is a very unusual event in life, it's a very decisive happening.

Nothing can be clearly determined by us as far as birth is concerned—that is, where to take birth, the purpose of taking birth, the circumstances surrounding the birth, and so on. But about death we can certainly decide how we are going to die, where we are going to die, why we are going to die. We can definitely determine the way we want to die.

So Mahavira had given permission to follow the discipline of death for this reason also that one who will die applying this method will automatically become the determiner of his next birth as well. Because one who has managed to choose his death, who has arranged to die voluntarily, for him nature provides an opportunity to choose his next birth too. This is the other side of it.

If one exits from the gate of life with dignity and grandeur, in full knowledge, then the other gates will become wide open and welcome him

with high regard and honor too. So those who wish to determine their next lives should first go through death with their own willingness. This was also the reason why Mahavira gave his permission. So the point is: an ordinary man wanting to commit suicide is not a man of will.

You have talked about how the subtle body can be separated from the physical body using one's willpower. Can the subtle body of a seeker who follows the discipline of witnessing, or that of a seeker who follows the discipline of tathata, suchness, be separated without exercising the will?

To follow the discipline of witnessing requires a great resolve. Following the discipline of *tathata* requires even greater resolve. It is the greatest resolution ever. When a man determines to live like a witness, that in itself is a great resolution. For example, a man decides he will not eat. He resolves to remain hungry for the day. Another man decides he will eat, but instead of watching himself eat, he will eat watchfully. This is a more difficult resolution.

It is not too difficult to give up food. The truth is, for those who have plenty to eat, it is easy to go without food for a day or two. That's why in an affluent society the cults of dieting and fasting become popular. For example, in America the idea of dieting has become very popular. People immediately become attracted to naturopathy.

When people have enough to eat, the idea of fasting once in a while appeals to them. It seems

to make one feel lighter and more cheerful. In fact in a poor society, staying hungry may be a kind of use of one's willpower. But in an affluent society it's a matter of convenience. Actually, if food becomes sufficiently available throughout the world, fasting will turn out to be a necessity for everyone. People will have to remain with empty stomachs once in a while. But witnessing is a very difficult thing.

Let's understand it this way. For instance, you make a decision that you won't walk, that you will remain seated in the same chair for eight hours. Now this is not a big thing. You decided not to walk, so you are not walking. Someone else decides he will walk for eight hours—this is not a big thing either, because since he decided to walk, he is walking. But witnessing means: you'll walk, and at the same time you will also know that "you" are not walking. What does witnessing mean? It means you'll walk as well as know that it is not "you" who is walking—that "you" are simply witnessing the act of walking. This is a much more subtle resolution, a supreme resolution indeed.

Tathata, suchness, is the supreme-most resolution; it's the ultimate resolve. There is no determination higher than this. Even the resolve to enter death voluntarily is not so great a resolve really. *Tathata* means: accepting things as they are. In a way, even the resolve to die voluntarily has its roots somewhere in non-acceptance. That is, we want to know what death is; we want to verify whether death actually occurs or not.

Tathata means: if death appears, we will die; if life remains, we'll continue to live. Neither are we concerned with life, nor with death. If darkness falls, we'll stay in the dark; if the light

appears, we'll settle with light. If something good comes to us, we'll receive it; if something bad befalls us, we'll bear it. Whatsoever happens, we are willing to accept it—we deny nothing. Let me explain this to you with an example.

Diogenes was passing through a forest. He walked around naked—had a beautiful body. It seems quite possible man must have started wearing clothes in order to cover his ugliness. This seems highly possible. We are always interested in hiding the ugly parts of our body. But this man Diogenes was a very handsome man. He lived naked.

So as he was passing through the forest, four men engaged in the business of capturing and selling slaves, saw him. They figured if they could capture this man—good looking, strong, powerful—they may receive a good price for him. But they felt very apprehensive and couldn't find any way to capture him without risking their lives.

Somehow, they tried and managed to surround him. Diogenes stood in the middle, calm and unperturbed. He asked, "What do you want to do?" The men were very surprised. They took out chains. Diogenes stretched out his hands. Full of fear and with trembling hands, the captors began to chain him.

Diogenes said, "No need to tremble. Come, let me tie the chains for you." He helped them put on the chains. The men were simply flabbergasted.

After having chained him firmly, they said, "What sort of a man are you? We are putting you in chains and you are helping us! We were afraid this might lead to some fighting and trouble."

Diogenes said, "You are having fun chaining me, I am having fun in being chained. Where is the need for any trouble? It's great! Now tell me, where do we go from here?"

The men said, "We feel very embarrassed in telling you that we are in the business of slavery. We'll now take you to the market place and put you up for sale." Diogenes said, "Good, let's go." He took off with great excitement and began walking even faster than the captors. They said, "Please slow down a little. What's the hurry?"

Diogenes said, "Now that we are going to the market place, why not reach in time?"

So finally they reached the market place. It was very crowded. Those who had come to buy slaves turned their eyes toward Diogenes. They had rarely seen a slave of this quality, because he looked more like an emperor. A huge crowd gathered around him.

He was made to stand on the platform where the slaves were auctioned. Raising his voice, the auctioneer said, "Here is a slave for sale. Come forward and name your price."

Diogenes said, "Shut up, you fool! Ask these men, did I walk in front, or did they? Did they tie the chains on me or did I let them tie the chains on me?"

His captors said, "The man is right. Left to ourselves, we don't believe we could have captured him. And indeed he walked ahead of us so fast that we could not keep pace with him—we had to practically run behind him. So it is not correct to say we have brought him to the market place. The truth is: we have followed him to this place. And it is not right to say we have made

him a slave. The fact is, this man agreed to become a slave, we didn't make him."

Diogenes said, "Stop talking nonsense you fools, and let me do my own auctioneering! Besides, this man's voice is not loud enough, no one will be able to hear him in this large crowd."

So Diogenes raised his voice and said, "A master has come here for sale. Anyone interested in buying him should come forward."

Someone from the crowd asked, "You call yourself a master?"

Diogenes said, "Yes, I call myself a master. I tied the chains on my own. I have come here on my own willingness. I stand here for sale of my own free will. And I shall leave whenever I choose to leave. Nothing can happen against my will, because whatsoever happens I make that my will."

Diogenes is saying, "Whatsoever happens, I make that my will." This man has indeed attained to *tathata*, suchness. What it means is: whatever goes on, he is ready for it. He resists nothing at all. In no way can you defeat him, because he will already be a defeated man; you cannot beat him because he will readily allow you to hurt him; you cannot subjugate him because he will readily submit. You can't do anything to such a man, because no matter what you do, he will not resist. This is indeed a demonstration of a truly supreme resolve.

So *tathata* is the ultimate will. One who has attained *tathata* has attained God. Therefore, the question is not whether a seeker who follows the discipline of witnessing, or one who follows the discipline of *tathata* would attain the same as a seeker who attains by following the discipline of will. It is already attained by him without any problem.

The discipline of will is the most elementary. The discipline of witnessing is of the intermediary kind, and *tathata* is the ultimate *sadhana*, the ultimate discipline. So start with the practice of will, take a voyage through witnessing, and reach ultimately to *tathata*, suchness. There is no conflict among the three.

Please explain the difference between witnessing and tathata.

In witnessing, the duality is present. The witness finds himself separate from that which he experiences. If a thorn pricks his foot, the witnessing man says, "The thorn has not pricked me, it has pricked my body—I am only the knower of it. The piercing has occurred at one place, while the awareness of it is present somewhere else."

So in the mind of a witness, there exists a duality, a separation between the experiencing of an event and the actual occurrence of it. Therefore, he cannot rise up to the state of *adwaita*, non-duality. And this is why the seeker who stops at the level of being a witness, a watcher, remains confined to a kind of dualism. He ultimately divides the existence into conscious and unconscious. Conscious means the one who knows, and the unconscious means that which is known. So eventually he is bound to end up dividing existence into *purusha* and *prakriti*.

Both of these words—*purusha* and *prakriti*—are highly significant. Perhaps the true meaning of *prakriti* may not have occurred to you. *Prakriti* doesn't mean "nature." In fact,

there is no word for *prakriti* in English. *Prakriti* means: that which was in existence before everything came to be—*pra-kriti*. *Prakriti* does not mean *srishti* or nature, because *srishti* means that which exists after creation. The word *prakriti* means that which was before creation.

The word *purusha* is also very meaningful. The equivalents of such words are extremely difficult to find in any other language of the world, because all these words are born out of very special experiences. You know what *pur* means; *pur* means the city. For example, Kanpur, Nagpur. So *pur* indicates the city, and the one who resides in the city is the *purusha*. The human body is like a town, a city, and there is someone who resides in it—he is the *purusha*. *Prakriti*, therefore, is the *pur*, and the one who lives in it—separate, unattached—is the *purusha*.

So the witness comes as far as the separation of *purusha* and *prakriti*. He will set them apart as two entities—the conscious and the unconscious, and a distance will be created between the knower and the known.

Tathata is even more remarkable—the ultimate. *Tathata* means: there is no duality. There is neither a knower nor is there anything to be known. Or, in other words, the knower is the known. Now it is not that the thorn is hurting me and I am aware of it; or that the thorn and I are separate from each other. It's not even that it would have been better if the thorn had not pierced me, or that it would be good if the thorn came out—no, there is nothing of this sort. Now, everything is accepted: the presence of the thorn, the pricking of it, the awareness of being pricked by it, the experience of pain—everything. And they are different parts of the same thing. There-

fore, I am the thorn, I am the very occurrence of pricking, I am the awareness of this occurrence. I myself am the very realization of this all—I am all of this.

That's why there is no going beyond this "I", my very being. I cannot think, "It would have been better if the thorn had not pricked me"—how can I? For I am the very thorn, the pricking of it, and the knowing of being pricked as well. Nor can I think, "It would be good if the thorn didn't prick me," because that would be tantamount to tearing myself apart from my very own being.

Tathata is the ultimate state there is. In that state, whatsoever is, is. It's a state of the ultimate acceptance of that-which-is. It contains no distinctions. But one cannot reach *tathata* without having been first a witness. However, one can stop at the level of witnessing, if he so desires, and choose not to arrive at *tathata*. Similarly, without the use of will, one cannot attain the state of witnessing. Although, having gained willpower, one may wish to stay there and not come to the point of witnessing.

One who stops with attaining firmness of resolve would of course become very powerful, but he won't be able to attain wisdom. And therefore, the ability to make a resolve can be misused, because wisdom is not required to attain it. One will surely gain a lot of power, but that is precisely why he can abuse it. The entire black magic is a product of willpower. One who practices it gains a lot of power, but he lacks wisdom totally. He can end up using that power without any discrimination.

A man of will becomes filled with power. It is difficult to predict right away what use he will

make of it. He can obviously put it to bad use. Power in itself is neutral. Nevertheless, it is necessary—whether one intends to use it for good or for evil. And as I see it, rather than remaining a weakling, it is better if one uses his power for evil purposes—for the simple reason that one who commits an evil act now may someday use the same power for a good cause. One who cannot do evil can never do good either. That's why I say it's better to be powerful than to be impotent and a wimp.

So a man of power can set out on the path of good as well as evil. It is better to follow the course of goodness, because if followed rightly, it will bring you to the state of witnessing. You won't end up as a witness if you follow the course of evil; rather, you will simply wander around within the confines of your willpower. Then you will get into mesmerism and hypnotism, tantras and mantras, witchcraft and voodooism. All kinds of things will crop up, but they won't lead you on a journey toward the soul.

This is becoming lost. The power will indeed be there, but gone astray. If the power is put on the course of goodness, it is sure to give rise to the witness within you, and ultimately that power can be used to know and attain oneself. This is what I call the course of goodness. By the course of evil I mean: controlling, possessing, enslaving the other. This is what black magic is. Making use of the power for the purpose of attaining oneself, knowing who am I, what am I, and living authentically, is moving in goodness. And it will indeed lead one toward becoming a witness.

If the urge to attain the state of witnessing is satisfied with the knowing of oneself, the seeker reaches up to the fifth body and stops there.

However, if the urge is further intensified, one discovers that he is not alone, he contains everything. That the sun and the moon and the stars, the rocks, the soil, the flowers are all part of him; that his very being, his existence incorporates all the rest. If the seeker proceeds with such an intense feeling, he reaches *tathata*.

Tathata, suchness, is the ultimate flowering of religion, it is the supreme achievement. It is total acceptance. Whatsoever happens, one is open and agreeable to it. Only such an individual can become totally silent, because even a little bit of resentment can prolong the restlessness. One's restlessness and tension will continue to remain if he carries even a small degree of complaint. Even the slightest idea, "It didn't happen the way it should have," and the tension will continue to persist.

The experience of supreme silence, the experience of the greatest freedom from tension, and that of the ultimate liberation is possible only in the state of *tathata*. However, only a man of will can eventually attain the state of witnessing, and only his going deeper into witnessing can bring him to the state of *tathata*. One who has not yet known what being a witness means can never know what total acceptance is.

One who hasn't realized that he is separate from the thorn which is pricking him is not yet ready to know that the thorn is a part of him. In fact, one who comes to experience the separateness of the thorn can take the next step of feeling one with the thorn as well.

So *tathata* is the fundamental principle. Among all the spiritual disciplines discovered all over the world, *tathata* is the greatest. That's why one of Buddha's names is Tathagat. It

would be good to have some understanding of what this word "Tathagat" means. It will be useful in comprehending the meaning of *tathata*.

Buddha has used the word "Tathagat" for himself. He would say, for instance, "Tathagat said . . ." Tathagat means: thus came, thus gone. Just as a breeze comes and goes away without any purpose, without any meaning. Just as a breath of air enters your room and goes out—without any reason. So the one whose coming and going away is as unmotivated, as desireless as the breeze, such a being is called Tathagat. But who would come and go like a breeze?

He alone can pass like a breeze who has attained to *tathata*. Only he to whom the coming and the going makes no difference can move like a breeze. If he needs to come, he comes; if he needs to go, he goes—the same as Diogenes did. It made no difference to him whether people put him in chains or did not put him in chains. Diogenes said later on, "Only one who is prone to be a slave can be nervous about becoming a slave. Since no one can make me a slave, why should I be afraid I might be taken as a slave? One who carries even the slightest anxiety that he may be turned into a slave, he alone will remain in fear of it. And one who has such a fear is indeed a slave. Since I happen to be the lord and master myself, you can never enslave me. Even in chains, I am the master, and will remain so in your prison as well. It makes no difference where you throw me, I still remain the lord and master. My mastership is total and complete!"

So the journey consists of this: from will to witness, and from witness to *tathata*.

You mentioned that there is no comparable word for *prakriti* in the English language. Isn't the word "constitution" similar in meaning to *prakriti*?

No, it's not the same meaning. Constitution in that sense means an individual's make-up, his psycho-physical structure. Constitution in this sense means one's system, one's physical and psychological make-up as such. *Prakriti* is something very different. Normally we use *prakriti* in the sense that, "That man's constitution is such . . ." But this kind of usage is not correct. *Prakriti* means that which was before creation—pre-created. And *pralaya* means: post-creation—that which follows the creation, the end of creation. So *prakriti* means that which was even before the creation came to be, that which didn't need to be created—which has always been, beginningless. That which already is. *Srishti* means the created—that which came to be.

There is no word in European languages which stands for *prakriti*, because these languages are influenced by Christianity. In Europe there are words such as the "creation", and the "creator". In the Indian languages exists the word *prakriti*, although not everyone uses it in the sense the Sankhyaites, the Vaisheshikas, the Jainas use it. This word belongs to them. In their view, that which has been eternally present, which has never been created, is *prakriti*. It is already there even before your creating anything.

For example when you build a house, the design, the structure of it is its constitution. But the material that goes into the making of it—the soil, the air, the heat—is all *prakriti*. That which

arises out of it is simply its structure. However, that which was present even before the making of the structure—which you did not create, which no one created, which is uncreated, which always was—that something is called *prakriti*. There is no word equivalent to *prakriti* in any of the European languages.

Is tathata the same as being just aware?

Actually, there is a slight difference between *tathata* and what you call “just awareness.” Witnessing is also slightly different from it. You can say that being “just aware” makes up the link between witnessing and *tathata*. As you move from witnessing to *tathata*, you pass through the state of “just awareness.”

In the state of witnessing, there exists a firm feeling of “I am” and “you are.” In the state where there is just awareness, only the feeling of “I am-ness” remains, the feeling of “you” disappears. There is just the feeling of am-ness. In *tathata*, besides the feeling of am-ness, there is the feeling that my am-ness, my existence and your you-ness, your existence, constitute only one is-ness, one existence; that they are one and the same. As long as there exists just the awareness, just the feeling of am-ness, there will remain a world outside my state of am-ness—a world which I am not, a world that exists beyond the limits of my am-ness, separate.

Tathata is limitless, it is simply being. So if you mean *tathata*, then it is not just awareness; it means just being. That’s the right expression; being has a much wider connotation. The mo-

ment you say, "just awareness," you obviously leave something out. The word "just" is indicative of omission. When you say, "just consciousness," you exclude something that does not fall within the parameters set by using the word "just"; otherwise, why would you have added "just" before consciousness?

Can we say: only awareness?

Yes, saying "only awareness" will do, but again, there is no need to add "only" before it. Saying "awareness" is enough—then there is no problem.

You have said that by resolving consciously to withdraw inside, or at the time of death, the entire life energy shrinks and returns to the center for the purpose of turning into a seed once again. At which center does the energy shrink? Does it concentrate at the agya chakra, at the navel, or at some other point? Which is the most important chakra, and why?

This requires a little consideration. The whole energy will of course shrink before death occurs. Before one embarks on a new journey, the energy which is otherwise dispersed all over the body will return to a point. This is the same as when one moves from a house—he collects all his important belongings. When he lived there, all kinds of things were spread out in every part

of the house, from the bathroom to the living room. So at the time of moving, he sorts out his possessions. He throws away the junk, packs up the important stuff, and sets out on a new journey.

Just as we abandon one life, one body, and commence the journey of another life, another body—similarly the consciousness which was spread out withdraws and once again becomes the seed. Up to now it functioned as an actuality, now it will once again become a potentiality. Because now, like a seed, it will enter a new body.

Just as a tree leaves seeds behind before dying, similarly the body too leaves behind seeds before it meets death. What we call sperm or ova are the seeds left by the body at the time of death. These are the seeds released prior to death, in anticipation of death. The sperm contains the entire built-in program of your body, it contains the exact replica of your body. As the body gets ready to depart, it leaves behind the tiny seed. This phenomenon occurs at one level—the physical. Similarly, consciousness, on a different level, gathers itself and becomes a seed in order to enter the seed present in some other body.

All journeys begin with the seed and end with the seed. Remember, that which is the beginning is also the end. The journey's cycle ends where it started. We begin from a seed, we end up again as a seed. So the question is: at the moment of death, at which center would the consciousness gather to shrink and become a seed? It would, of course, gather at the very center you have lived through all your life. It would concentrate at the center which was most valuable to you in your life. Because that was your most ac-

tive center; one should say, that was the very point from where your whole vital energy functioned.

For example, if a man lived his whole life obsessed with sex, if he knew nothing beyond sex, if sex was all he lived for—he earned wealth to enjoy sex, he went after a high position in the pursuit of sex, he wanted to have good health so that he could indulge more into sex—if sex was the most predominant center functioning in his life, then that is where the entire energy will converge at the moment of death. Then his new journey will begin from the sex center. Why? Because, his next birth will be an ongoing journey of the same sex-obsessed center. This man's consciousness will gather at the sex center in the dying moments, and that is the point where his life will come to an end. His life energy will leave through his genitalia. Had this man lived through a different center, the energy would have concentrated and left from that center.

The center around which one's life has revolved is the center from where he will depart. The place where he dwelt the whole life will be the place from where he will depart. Therefore, a yogi can leave from the *agya* chakra, and a lover from his heart chakra. The life energy of an enlightened man would leave from the *sahasrar*, the seventh chakra—his skull will break open as he departs from there.

The point from where one makes an exit is the conclusive proof of how one has lived his life. Such techniques were discovered in the past that by looking at a dead body one could say through which chakra, through which door the consciousness left the body. All the chakras are

doors for entrance as well as for exit. The soul will use the same door for entering another body which it used for exiting the dying body. The soul will enter the new cell in a mother's womb through the same door from which it came out at the previous death—that's the only door it knows.

Therefore, the mental condition of the father and the mother, as well as their state of consciousness at the time of copulation determine what kind of soul will enter the womb. Because only that type of consciousness, that kind of soul will be attracted to seek that womb which fits with the center closest to the minds of the father and mother during the intercourse. If two individuals who have gone deep into meditation make love—not with the desire for sexual pleasure, but as an experiment in giving birth to a soul—they can make use of the highest possible chakras for that purpose.

This is the reason why the higher souls have to wait for a long time, because they need a womb of a higher quality—which is very difficult to find. Hence, many good souls cannot take birth again for hundreds of years. The same is the case with many of the evil souls. The ordinary souls are born right away. They take birth instantly, without any difficulty, because many suitable wombs are available to them every day. About one hundred and eighty thousand births take place everyday, excluding the number of people dying. Everyday about two hundred thousand souls can enter as many wombs—but this applies only to the ordinary souls.

Many souls, who after great difficulty were born on this earth, have been forced to take birth on other planets. The earth became incapable of

giving them birth again. This is the same as if a scientist born in India were to find a suitable job in America. He would be born on our soil, we would provide him with food and water, care and nourishment, but not a single living opportunity befitting his background and training. Obviously, he is forced to seek a position in America.

Today, most of the scientists from all different parts of the world have settled down in America. This is bound to be so. In the same manner, although we help souls evolve on this earth we do not make available a suitable womb for their next birth. Naturally, they are forced to seek opportunities for birth on other planets.

If we do indeed possess the talent for creating scientists, why aren't we also endowed with the ability to make the right kind of employment available to them?

No, there isn't any necessary correlation between the two. The problem is, creating a scientist depends on one set of requirements while providing him with a suitable employment depends on some other set of factors. Giving birth to a scientist depends on how his soul has lived through its previous lives. If the moment of love-making between a couple is such that a soul can have an access through the door of intellect, it will have found the suitable womb, and it will be born.

Providing work for a scientist, however, depends on how the entire society is set up, how it functions. Our scientist may earn ten thousand

rupees in America, but a thousand rupees in India. Moreover, he can have laboratory and research facilities in America which in India he may have to wait for a thousand years. In America, his discoveries will not be lost in the bureaucratic maze or rot in the stacks of files—they will earn him a Nobel Prize. Here in India, his superior will put a lid on it and will never allow it to see the light of day. And some day, if his work does ever become known to the public, the chances are that either the politician or his superior officer may claim the credit for it—he may never earn the credit for his own achievements. So all of this depends on a thousand and one things.

Many individuals who take birth and attain higher consciousness on this earth, have to seek birth on other planets. Actually, people who brought information from other planets to this earth were basically from the other planets. It's only now that the scientists have come to recognize there may be life on some fifty thousand planets. Yogis have known this since ancient times. In the past, however, they didn't have any means to verify it. But when the souls who belonged to other planets took birth on earth and brought the news, their hypothesis was confirmed. Similarly, those who have carried the news of this planet to other planets are also different kinds of souls—the ones which could not be conceived on the earth.

At the moment of death, the consciousness of man comes together totally. In that crystallized form it draws in all his conditionings, propensities, desires—the total essence, we may call it the perfume or the stench of his entire life—and moves on to its next journey. Mostly, this

journey will be automatic—there won't be any element of choice in it. It will be as if you pour water and it moves into small hollows in the earth. Similarly, in the normal course, a womb works like a hollow into which a nearby available consciousness enters.

Therefore, in most ordinary cases a man is born again and again in the same society, in the same country. Very rarely does this change. The variation occurs only when a suitable womb is not available. That's why it is so amazing that in the last two hundred years many great souls, which otherwise were born in India, had to take birth in Europe. Annie Besant, Madame Blavatsky, Leadbeater, Colonel Alcott—these are all souls from India who were forced to take birth in Europe. Lobsang Rampa, for example, is a Tibetan soul born in Europe. The reason for all this was that a womb was not available to them in the country of their birth, hence they had to look for it somewhere else.

An ordinary man is born immediately. This is like if you were to move from your house, you would obviously make a search for another house in the same neighborhood. If you fail to locate a house here, only then would you go looking for it somewhere else, in another neighborhood. If you don't find it in Bombay proper, you may hunt for it in the suburbs; if you don't succeed there, you may move ahead and look somewhere else. But once you have found the house, the matter is over. This phenomenon was put to a wonderful use. It would be good to consider a couple of things in order to see how this principle was used. It is necessary that we take a look at it now, because it carries a special significance in the context of the present times.

The most amazing application of it was made in India—through the caste system. The application was of great value. The Indians divided the entire society into four castes. The idea was that if a Brahmin died, his soul should be reborn as a Brahmin. If a Kshatriya died, his soul should be reborn as a Kshatriya.

It is obvious that if a society is divided into fixed divisions, then there is a great possibility that when a Kshatriya dies, his soul would seek its next abode in the same neighborhood. It will enter into the womb of a Kshatriya woman. And if a person's soul continues to be born as a Kshatriya for a few times, it will become Kshatriya-like. You won't be able to produce such a Kshatriya, such a fighter, even by giving someone a regular military training. Similarly, if a soul were to be reborn as a Brahmin ten or twenty times, the kind of pure Brahmanic quality that will unfold because of it can never be created by putting one into a *gurukul*—a residential school run by a Brahmin teacher—or by educating him.

The amazing thing is, we have devised educational means good for only one lifetime. Some people in the past had worked out a system of education that would last for an infinite number of lives. It was indeed a remarkable experiment, but it met with decay. It became corrupt and putrefied—not because the idea and its application were wrong, but because its fundamental *sutras*, its main principles were lost. And those who claim themselves to be the custodians of the system do not have a single *sutra* to vouch for. No Brahmin, no Shankaracharya holds any *sutra*, any understanding on which they can lay their claim or authority. They only quote their scriptures which state that a Brahmin is a Brahmin,

and a Shudra is a Shudra. But scriptures are of no use; only the scientific principles work.

So the most incredible experiment this country did was that of planning the birth of a soul for endless lives. That means they not only prepared the man for his future lives, they also made a controlled and systematic effort to redirect and channelize his consciousness for the lives ahead. Because it is possible that a Brahmin may take birth in a Shudra family and, lacking an appropriate environment, he may not be able to carry the gains of his past lives into his next lives. This can cause great difficulty. It is also conceivable that what he could have achieved in ten days by being born in a Brahmin's home, he may not achieve in ten years in a Shudra's home.

So such an advanced concept and far-reaching vision of human evolution was at the base of this clear four-fold division of the Indian society. The people had worked out the idea of taking birth in the same "neighborhood" so that one may keep finding wombs of the same quality for lives together.

All the twenty-four births of Mahavira and Buddha took place within the Kshatriya tradition. Their entire growth happened in a particular direction. In each birth they were given a definite training. Hence, no gap existed between the training and direction given to them in successive births—an unbroken continuity was maintained. That's why we could produce such incredible individuals. Producing people of such caliber now has become very difficult. Their appearance on this earth will now be only a matter of chance. Giving birth to such people through such a systematic planning has become very difficult indeed.

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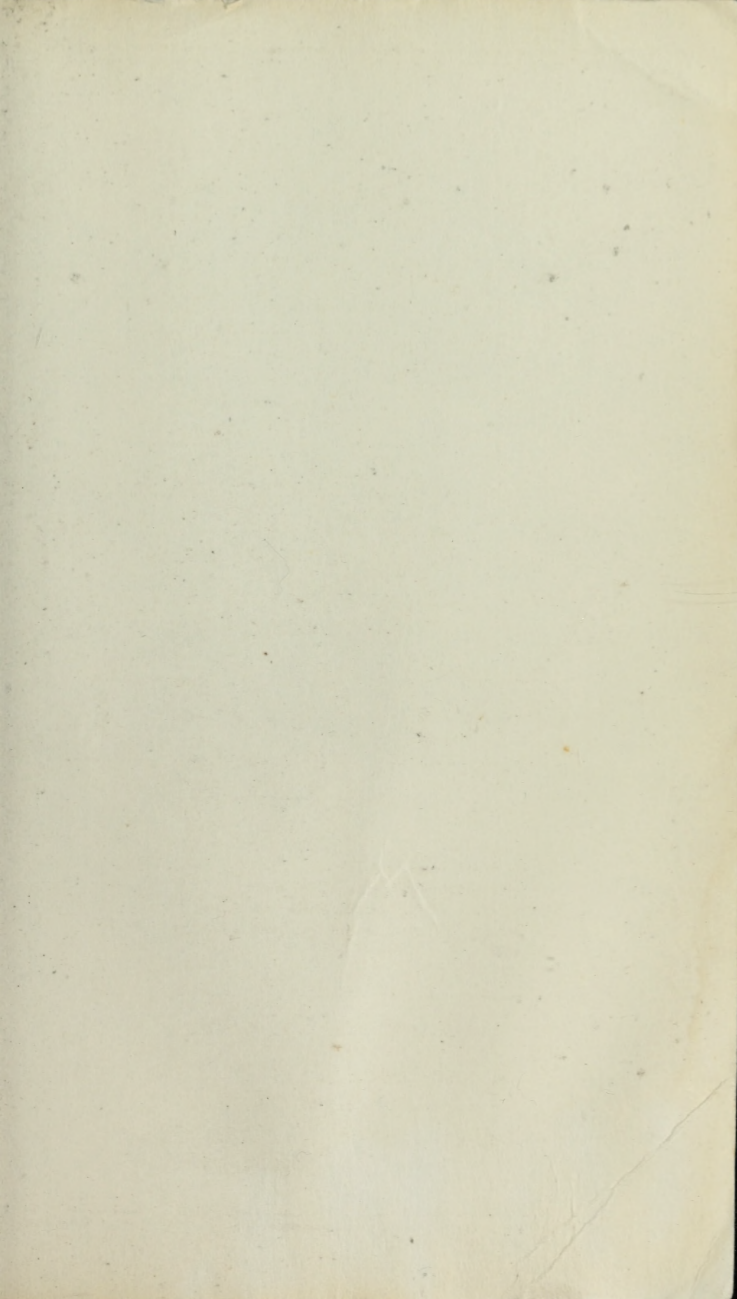
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